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Tasmanian Council of Social Service

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# Transport in the Community

## Final Report

*October 2014*

### **About TasCOSS**

TasCOSS is the peak body for the Tasmanian community services sector. Its membership comprises individuals and organisations active in the provision of community services to low-income, vulnerable and disadvantaged Tasmanians. TasCOSS represents the interests of its members and their clients to government, regulators, the media and the public. Through our advocacy and policy development, we draw attention to the causes of poverty and disadvantage and promote the adoption of effective solutions to address these issues.

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## Executive Summary

TasCOSS received funding through the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) for a facilitation project, *Transport in the Community: Integration and Innovation for Social Inclusion*, as proposed in our 2013-2014 Budget Priorities Statement. This report constitutes the final component of the project.

### Project scope

TasCOSS organised and facilitated four regional meetings and three sectoral meetings involving Tasmanian transport providers and key user stakeholders and focusing on opportunities and barriers for collaboration, coordination, integration, and innovation, and practical, low-cost ways in which improvements to transport options for transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians could be achieved, and also sent out a survey to all invitees. In each case, participants were asked to identify their key issues, concerns, challenges and opportunities in relation to passenger transport in Tasmania, and in particular the needs of transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians.

### Key findings from meetings/survey

Key barriers for meeting attendees and survey respondents were lack of public information on transport options; lack of coordination between funders and between trip generators and transport providers; funding levels; and a need for better information on real, as opposed to perceived transport needs in the community. Most participants felt that opportunities existed for better integration of existing service modes and services, as well as for new types of services.

### Key findings from workshops

The second part of each regional facilitation meeting involved attendees breaking into smaller workshop groups to discuss creating local transport solutions. Meeting attendees:

- Identified an extensive list of individuals and organisations that would need to be included in consultations on developing a local transport plan.
- Felt that to effectively address the needs of transport-disadvantaged residents in any particular area (whether a region or the state as a whole), a project would need to conduct an audit of current services; engage in a gap analysis and assess unmet need; identify barriers to accessing services; and explore possible local solutions.
- Thought that in order to bring transport operators and key stakeholders together to coordinate services, it might be necessary to start with bilateral discussions and to articulate to providers how cooperation can benefit them.

- Felt that beyond the question of limited resources, the lack of a whole-of-government approach to transport issues was a major barrier to communities developing transport plans.

### **Additional observations and analysis**

- Tasmania's per capita funding for public transport infrastructure and services is the lowest in the country at around \$200 a year. The next lowest is the Northern Territory, at \$270.
- Tasmanians most vulnerable to transport disadvantage are younger people who are not yet eligible to drive or who cannot afford a vehicle and who live outside the catchment of scheduled route services, cannot afford existing taxi fares, and are not formally eligible to use existing not-for-profit transport options.
- The greatest barrier for commercial services working together in creative ways appears to be simple financial risk. The greatest barrier to creative collaboration between for-profit and not-for-profit services appears to be the Commonwealth-State funding mix around HACC-funded transport, and the eligibility requirements that these funding arrangements impose.
- Tasmania's bus network and service planning appears to be effectively delegated to bus operators. Government funding and contracting models currently do not appear to reward operators for taking a holistic approach to their networks, or permit the government to review service offerings. Meanwhile, some aspects of current contracts—for example, pick-up/set-down exclusion zones—appear to be counterproductive.
- A clear understanding of not-for-profit transport supply and demand at the regional/remote level will be necessary if not-for-profit operators are to move more into the role of open-access feeder services for commercial trunk routes. The implications of new restrictions on the use of Commonwealth-funded vehicles for HACC-eligible groups who come under State funding (disabled under 65) urgently requires clarification, particularly as the NDIS comes on line.
- There appear to be many opportunities and few legislative or regulatory barriers for existing taxi operators to enter into contracts with bus companies to act as feeder services, or with service providers to act as a pick-up service. On the other hand, in rural or other areas poorly serviced by taxis, there may be a legitimate place for ridesharing apps such as Uber or Lyft. It has been suggested that governments have the opportunity to help taxis adapt to the app-driven age by creating a single city/state-branded taxi e-hailing app.

### **Innovations workshop**

TacCOSS used the key barriers and opportunities identified in meetings as the basis for a workshop bringing together key Tasmanian stakeholders and leading

innovators in the transport field. The workshop included three presentations and a workshop relating to key areas of opportunity in the Tasmanian transport landscape.

#### *Key insights from the innovations workshop*

- Given the huge diversity of flexible transport models, some form of open-access flexible transport service built around existing transport providers almost certainly could be developed for Tasmanian applications. Flexible transport options have the potential to help service people whose Metro services have been withdrawn as well peri-urban and rural areas poorly served by existing passenger transport.
- A centralised passenger transport information website should be easily achievable, given the plethora of existing examples, especially the Public Transport Victoria website.
- The Wheels for Work and Training project underway on the north coast will be a perfect opportunity to test out the potential for innovations such as flexible transport options.

#### **Project evaluation**

Overall, participant and respondent evaluations were very positive, with 73-75% describing the sessions/survey /workshop as 'extremely/very relevant' and 80-90+% offering positive assessments of the way in which activities were conducted and their impact on understanding and engagement with transport problems in the community.

## **Recommendations**

### *Immediate [2014-15]*

#### **For the State Government**

Recommendation 1: Finalise the creation of a centralised passenger transport website

Recommendation 2: Undertake an integrated transport pilot project.

Recommendation 3: Advocate with the Commonwealth for a not-for-profit transport system accessible to all.

Recommendation 4: Create a state-wide Mobility Manager.

Recommendation 5: Develop transport access plans.

Recommendation 6: Adopt a whole-of-government, evidence-based Transport Access Strategy.

Recommendation 7: Create incentives to increase public service passenger transport uptake.

### *Medium-term [2015-17]*

Recommendation 8: Increase funding for passenger transport in the 2015-18 Budgets by 10% per annum.

Recommendation 9: Support the development of technical mechanisms for better integration and coordination.

Recommendation 10: Develop regulatory strategies for dealing with the rise of ridesharing apps while helping the taxi sector face the app-driven future.

### *Longer-term [2016-18]*

Recommendation 11: Change bus funding/contracting models and conditions.

Recommendation 12: Develop transport infrastructure and hubs.

Recommendation 13: Create a statutory authority for managing and coordinating passenger transport.

### **For transport operators**

Recommendation 14: Develop user advisory councils.

Recommendation 15: Improve Metro's communication and consultation.

Recommendation 16: Support the development of a centralized transport website .

Recommendation 17: Develop better communication between bus companies and between bus and taxis.

Recommendation 18: Promote collaboration and strategic planning among not-for-profit transport operators.

## Introduction

The ability to get where you need to go consistently emerges in TasCOSS consultations as a key issue for transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians—people who cannot own or operate a vehicle due to age, disability, ill health, or financial constraints.

- As of 2010, 25.9% of Tasmanians in the lowest quintile of income could not easily get to the places they needed to go—up from 22.5% in 2006.
- For adults describing themselves as unemployed, this figure rose to 33.5%.
- For people with self-described health status of 'poor,' the figure was 39.6%.
- For Housing Tasmania renters, the figure was a staggering 41.6%, with 46.2% lacking access to a vehicle.<sup>1</sup>

A wide variety of passenger transport providers operate in Tasmania, including subsidised and unsubsidised route passenger services, commercial 'general hire' services (including taxis), and publicly and privately funded not-for-profit services. Nevertheless, despite the many and considerable improvements initiated in recent years by the state government and by private transport operators, the challenges facing transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians—particularly someone living in a rural or regional setting—are clear. At the moment, transport services in the state are largely characterized by:

- *Limited hours and frequency of operations*

Both subsidised and non-subsidised bus services are limited in their hours of operation and in the frequency of services. Not-for-profit door-to-door providers can offer only limited services due to funding constraints and reliance on volunteer drivers.
- *Limited geographic scope*

The routes of both subsidised and non-subsidised bus services are limited to particular areas. Only a small percentage of Tasmanians live or require transport to destinations within the suggested 400-600 metres of a bus stop.
- *Limited integration in:*
  - *Ticketing:* Private providers offer only limited integrated ticketing with public providers. The fees charged by not-for-profit providers are not at all integrated with the fares of private or public providers.
  - *Physical location:* The terminals and stops of private and public bus service are not always co-located or well-connected.
  - *Timetables:* Timetables of different providers sometimes do not mesh well.

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<sup>1</sup> ABS (2010), General Social Survey: Tasmania, 4159.0.55.003; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) General Social Survey, Tasmania, 2006 (cat. No. 4159.6.55.001).



- *Limited affordability:*

Low-income Tasmanians, particularly those living in rural or remote areas and those having to travel frequently, often find general access services or taxi fares unaffordable, even with concessions and/or the Transport Access Scheme.

- *Limited eligibility*

While a wide variety of not-for-profit transport services operate across the state, most of these cater only to those Tasmanians who fall into the categories for which the providing organisations are funded (frail aged, disability, users of particular services, etc.). Tasmanians on limited wages often also are ineligible for transport concessions and/or the Transport Access Scheme.

Although these issues severely hamper the mobility of transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians, they also discourage people with access to a car from shifting away from driving towards more environmentally sustainable and healthy public or communal transport.

No one service can be expected to solve these problems. However, better coordination and integration between existing services, as well as innovation in service types and funding, has the potential to begin to address these problems at relatively low cost.

TasCOSS received funding through the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) for a facilitation project, *Transport in the Community: Integration and Innovation for Social Inclusion* (hereafter the project), as proposed in our 2013-2014 Budget Priorities Statement.

The project involved the following:

- Preliminary **identification of key issues** facing both transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians and the Tasmanian transport sector, and potential areas for coordination, integration and innovation. Please see our Phase I Report, located on our web site at <http://www.tascoss.org.au/PolicyResearch/TransportProject/tabid/160/Default.aspx>.
- A series, over the course of six months, of **facilitated discussions** between Tasmanian transport providers and key stakeholders around opportunities and constraints for improved communication, coordination, collaboration, integration and innovation in the Tasmanian transport environment, and practical ways in which these can be achieved.
- A one-day **innovations workshop** bringing together Tasmanian discussion participants and innovators in the Australian transport field.

This report constitutes the final component of the project.

# 1. Regional and sectoral facilitated discussions and survey

## 1.1 Regional and sectoral meetings

TasCOSS organised and facilitated seven three-hour discussions—four regional meetings and three sectoral meetings—involving Tasmanian transport providers and key user stakeholders and focusing on opportunities and barriers for collaboration, coordination, integration, and innovation and practical, low-cost ways in which improvements can be achieved. Please see Schedule A of this report for a detailed list of attendees and the organisations they represent by meeting location/sector. TasCOSS thanks the organisations that kindly hosted the regional meetings.

## 1.2 Survey

TasCOSS also emailed a survey out to all invitees of its facilitation meetings and sector meetings to ensure those who could not attend a meeting had the ability to provide input. People who attended were also allowed to respond to the survey and there were a few open ended queries as well. All together, 28 people responded to the survey.

## 1.3 Key findings

As outlined in this project's proposal, and implicit in its Grant Deed, this project has been intended to serve two functions. The first of these has been to canvass and faithfully pass on the insights and recommendations of Tasmanian transport operators and key stakeholders in relation to possibilities for better communication, collaboration, coordination, integration and innovation in the passenger transport sector, as reflected in the contributions and responses of meeting and survey participants/respondents. As one survey participant wrote, "I have taken my time to fill this in—will you listen to what I have to say?"

The second function has been to distil additional observations and analysis from these insights and recommendations, as well as from supplementary research.

### 1.3.1 Key findings from meetings/survey

In each meeting, participants were asked to identify the key issues, concerns, challenges and opportunities in relation to passenger transport in Tasmania, and in particular the needs of transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians. Participants 'voted' for their highest priority issues through placement of four dot stickers on lists that included issues mentioned across the course of the meetings.

The following is a summary of the highest priority barriers and opportunities identified during the facilitation meetings in each region of the State, in order of priority.

- Lack of information for the public was a key concern for meeting attendees, with a centralised website and supporting community focal points discussed as the main way of overcoming this barrier.

- Many attendees mentioned the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* as preventing the use of school busses for general access services. Some not-for-profit operators complained of the accreditation burden created by the Tasmanian *Passenger Transport Services Act 2011*'s definition of a 'large' vehicle (which requires operator accreditation) as one of 10 or more seats, down from the previous 12 seats, although it was not clear if these changes had in any way reduced their services. The absence of multi-hiring provisions under the Tasmanian *Taxi Industry Act 1995* was mentioned by a few participants as potentially stifling service innovation in the taxi industry.
- Lack of coordination—between funders, between trip generators and transport providers—also was an area of concern. As also noted in the Phase I report, transport falls across many departments and levels of government; no single body has an overview of the whole sector or of all transport-related policy initiatives, making it difficult to achieve a coordinated approach.
- Most participants felt that opportunities existed for better integration of existing service modes and services, as well as for new types of services.

Table 3 – Highest Priority Barriers and Opportunities, Facilitation Meetings

Highest Priority Barriers	Highest Priority Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of information (for users/providers/coordinators)</li> <li>2. Legislative barriers (Disability Discrimination Act, Passenger Transport Services Act, Taxi Industry Act)</li> <li>3. Lack of funding and lack of coordination between funders</li> <li>4. Lack of coordination between institutions and service providers (schools, hospitals, community service organisations) and transport providers</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better information for public via website and community focal points</li> <li>2. Better integration of profit and NFP and other transport options (active transport, carpooling etc)</li> <li>3. Coordination and integration of timetables, ticketing, planning and park n rides</li> <li>4. New types of services such as flexible transport services, including those feeding scheduled services</li> </ol>

Although overall the barriers and opportunities identified by survey respondents were similar to those of meeting attendees, funding registered higher in survey respondents' concerns. Survey respondents also identified the need for better information on real, as opposed to perceived transport needs in the community.

Table 4 – Highest Priority Barriers and Opportunities, Survey

Highest Priority Barriers	Highest Priority Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of funding and lack of coordination between funders</li> <li>2. Lack of coordination between institutions and service providers (hospitals, community service organisations) and transport providers</li> <li>3. Lack of information (for users/providers/coordinators)</li> <li>4. Lack of information on real needs versus perceived needs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better information for providers with a focus on remote and regional areas</li> <li>2. Coordination and integration of timetables, ticketing, planning and park n rides.</li> <li>3. Better information for public via website and community focal points</li> <li>4. Better integration of for-profit, not-for-profit and other transport options (active, carpooling, ride-sharing etc.)</li> </ol>

These priorities represent an extremely limited summary of the wide-ranging and informative discussions that took place at these meetings. For a detailed record of the findings of the meetings and the survey organised by sector, please see Schedule B.

In this regard, the meetings and survey revealed some interesting examples of existing and emerging collaboration and coordination between transport providers, both within the same sector and between sectors.

*Example:* Several regional not-for-profit operators said that they referred callers on to other not-for-profits if they lacked capacity to meet a specific request.

*Example:* On the east coast, Tassielink and Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST) have put in place an innovative concept putting CTST clients on Tassielink busses on the east coast run from Swansea to Hobart in place of a CTST car making the drive. Under the arrangement, CTST picks up the client and, if required, a carer at the client's home and accepts payment for the total return trip. Clients pay no more than they would have paid CTST to do the long-distance trip; carers pay a fixed nominal sum. CTST retains its fee out of the total, with the rest going to Tassielink. On arrival at the Tassielink terminus in Hobart, and again at the end of the return journey, a CTST car can be waiting to transport the client to their final destination in Hobart or back home. The arrangement has the potential to benefit everyone—CTST's clients, both providers, and CTST's volunteers.

- CTST's clients face no financial disadvantage, and because CTST has kept their car in the east coast area for the day, more clients can be served for local trips.

- While Tassielink's percentage is usually less than the normal fare, the arrangement gives Tassielink extra business that would otherwise have gone to CTST.
- CTST volunteers are spared long and tiring drives and a wait in Hobart, making it possible for them to volunteer for shorter periods of time in the day and thereby keeping CTST's volunteer base sustainable.

It is worth noting, as both operators observe, that at the moment this arrangement has not resulted in substantial uptake; this may be partly because the current Tassielink timetable, which is driven by school timetables, does not easily meet CTST's HACC-eligible clients' needs.<sup>2</sup> Both operators stress, however, that they have developed the arrangement to demonstrate that it can be done, in the event that CTST's services someday become available to a broader range of clients when eligibility restrictions are lifted—"not for today," as one interviewee put it, "but for tomorrow when someone turns the lights on."

### 1.3.2 Key findings from workshops

The second part of each regional facilitation meeting involved attendees breaking into smaller workshop groups to discuss creating local transport solutions. Attendees were asked:

- If you were going to set up a committee to work as a team to address the needs of the transport disadvantaged in your community, what organisations would be critical members of the committee?
- What type of information would your community need to share or obtain in order to address the needs of the transport disadvantaged?
- How could your team bring together transport operators in your area to increase coordination between existing services?
- What are the key barriers to implementing this plan?

*Meeting attendees and respondents:*

- Identified an extensive list of individuals and organisations that would need to be included in consultations on developing a local transport plan.
- Suggested that in order to effectively address the needs of transport-disadvantaged residents in any particular area (whether a region or the state as a whole), a project would need to conduct an audit of current services; engage

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<sup>2</sup> While HACC-funded services can in principle transport non-HACC-eligible clients provided that a HACC-eligible client is not disadvantaged, the priority given to HACC clients means that a provider cannot reasonably be expected to take a booking for a non-HACC user, given that a HACC client might require a service at the last minute.

in a gap analysis and assess unmet need; identify barriers to accessing services; and explore possible local solutions.

- Agreed that in order to bring transport operators and key stakeholders together to coordinate services, it might be necessary to start with bilateral discussions before moving on to group discussions, and to articulate to providers how cooperation can benefit them.
- Felt that beyond the question of limited resources, the lack of a whole-of-government approach to transport issues was a major barrier to communities developing transport plans.

Detailed results are presented in Schedule C.

#### 1.4 Additional observations and analysis

From the results of the meetings/workshops/survey as well as supplementary research, TasCOSS notes the following.

##### **Funding:**

Tasmanian transport operators are not unreasonable in pointing out low levels of funding for passenger transport in the state. Per capita, Tasmanian levels of expenditure on passenger transport are the lowest of all states and territories.

In recent years, Tasmania has spent roughly \$200 per capita per annum on public transport infrastructure and services.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the next lowest state, South Australia, spends roughly \$605 per capita across the same categories; Victoria spends roughly \$745 on services alone. Even the Northern Territory spends more, at nearly \$270 per capita across the same categories.<sup>4</sup>

This environment forces relevant government departments to focus more on cost management than on what might be better service provision for transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians.

The cost to Tasmania of this low level of commitment is difficult to calculate, given the fact that so few government services collect information on the transport options

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<sup>3</sup> The total allocation in the 2013-14 State Budget to the Minister for Sustainable Transport was \$102,475,000, including allocations for infrastructure (\$4.627 million), transport subsidies and concessions (\$68.026 million) and grants and subsidies (\$29.820 million). The equivalent total allocation in the 2014-15 State Budget appears to be \$102,332,000, including allocations for passenger transport (\$3.4m), metropolitan general access services (\$39.956m), non-metropolitan general access services (\$7.926m), rural and special needs school buses (\$22.358m), student-only passenger services (\$24.174m) and the Transport Access Scheme (\$4.518m). The total figure rises steadily but slowly across the forward estimates to a total of \$108,309,000 in 2017-18. As of September 2013, Tasmania's population was 513,400, leading to a per capita spend of \$199.60 in 2013-14, \$199.32 in 2014-15, and (assuming a stable population) \$210.96 in 2017-18.

<sup>4</sup> Figures for other states provided by the Victorian and South Australian Councils of Social Service and the Northern Territory Department of Transport.

available to and used by their clients. Anecdotal evidence, for instance, suggests that lack of transport options for people who are unable to drive themselves but who are not eligible for HACC services may play a significant role in missed doctor and hospital appointments, at substantial cost to the state's health system. However, the cost in terms of individual lives is well-documented, particularly in regard to young people, for whom lack of transport can be an insurmountable obstacle (see below).

The results of the current Australian Senate inquiry into the role of public transport in delivering productivity outcomes, now due in December of this year, are likely to show that in the absence of public transport options, low-income and disadvantaged job-seekers face significant barriers in accessing work, education and training. Good passenger transport options, including those that may be delivered through innovation, therefore are almost certainly a sound investment in Tasmania's economic future, as well as in the lives of the state's most vulnerable individuals.

### **Groups vulnerable to transport disadvantage.**

Discussion of transport disadvantage often focuses on elderly and disabled Tasmanians. However, given the existence of HACC-funded transport services specifically aimed at these groups, in fact the group the most vulnerable to transport disadvantage in the state is non-elderly, non-disabled people who are not eligible to drive (due either to age, the time and cost required to obtain a license, or loss of license) or who cannot afford a vehicle. All too many such people both live outside the catchment of scheduled route services and cannot afford existing taxi fares, as well as not being formally eligible to use existing not-for-profit transport options. Their inability to access transport affects not only their personal circumstances and futures—through inability to access non-school education, training or work—but ultimately the economic and social future of the state.

Young people make up the bulk of this category—an ironic fact, considering that a large proportion of public transport funding is spent on provision of school busses. However, other groups at particular risk of falling in this category include new migrants and humanitarian entrants (particularly women) and Housing Tasmania renters (46.2% of whom lacked access to a vehicle in 2010, as noted above).<sup>5</sup>

While overall access to transport for people in this category clearly is related to personal/family income/wealth levels, such people are also simply hostage to the priorities of others. One of the most frustrating stories that TasCOSS has heard came from a young girl living in a rural community who wanted to attend an academic enrichment program on Saturdays at the regional LINC; she was unable to attend, however, because there was no bus service and her parents had to drive her brother to sporting events.

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<sup>5</sup> ABS (2010), General Social Survey: Tasmania, 4159.0.55.003; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) General Social Survey, Tasmania, 2006 (cat. No. 4159.6.55.001).



The story illustrates not only counterproductive norms in some parts of Tasmanian society—low prioritisation of education, gender bias—but also the ineffectiveness of the current approach to passenger transport in providing a person without a license or a car with the means to overcome these norms, limiting their individual attainment as well as the state's intellectual and economic development.

#### **Factors that stand in the way of existing services working together in creative ways:**

The single greatest barrier to for-profit services (Metro, private bus companies, taxi services) working together in creative ways appears to be simple financial risk: in the absence of extra funding, many services do not feel that they are operating at a sufficient profit to be able to absorb losses if innovative arrangements do not deliver immediate results.

The single greatest barrier to creative collaboration between existing for-profit and not-for-profit services—for instance, the use of not-for-profit services as feeder services for route services—appears to be the Commonwealth-State funding mix around HACC transport, and the impediments to redefining not-for-profit services' roles that these funding arrangements impose.

At the moment, while HACC-funded services can in principle transport non-HACC clients provided that a HACC client is not disadvantaged, the priority given to HACC clients means that a provider is constrained from providing a firm booking for a non-HACC user, given that a HACC client might require a service at the last minute. Consequently, although HACC-funded services do sometimes transport non-HACC clients, the option is not publicised, and is limited to those in the know. Constraints around the use of Commonwealth-funded vehicles for non-Commonwealth-remit activities have the potential to further limit the ability of HACC-funded services to open up their services to non-HACC clients.

Meanwhile, both for-profit and not-for-profit services lose out on potential fares, keeping them from growing their services, leaving them more dependent on continued government funding, and in some cases threatening their viability. The example of the east coast collaboration between CTST and Tassielink is a case in point: in the absence of CTST's ability to seek out business as a feeder service for non-HACC clients, Tassielink's ability to run an additional bus at a time that would be more convenient to HACC clients and non-HACC clients alike is compromised.

#### **Buses:**

In the absence of any central planning mechanism, Tasmania's bus network and service planning appears to be effectively delegated to bus operators. These operators appear to show a wide range of approaches to service provision. Some bus companies appear proactive in seeking out new opportunities for serving communities, and appear to take a holistic approach to their profits, permitting more profitable service times to subsidise less profitable runs. Other companies appear more risk-averse, and appear reluctant to add service times which may not immediately turn a net profit.



From this preliminary research, it is not clear to what extent overall profit margins, government subsidies or company structures play a role in the adoption of either stance. While the latter stance is certainly understandable from a business point of view, it does not necessarily lead to the best results for the communities being served—particularly in the case of communities experiencing relatively rapid demographic change.

No provisions currently appear to exist in the government's funding and contracting models that reward a holistic approach, or that permit the Department of State Growth to mandate adjustments in service offerings to meet changed needs. The latter point is particularly important given the Tasmanian Government's existing practice of procuring 5+5 year contracts. If adopted going forward, this approach means that in 2018 the government will effectively be locking in service offerings based on 2018 needs for the next ten years, with little ability to respond to changes in community needs in the 2018-2028 period.

There is need for a funding/contracting model with flexibility to review service offerings at the Department of State Growth's initiative and in consultation with bus operators and communities.

Meanwhile, some aspects of current contracts—for example, pick-up/set-down exclusion zones—appear to be counterproductive. For example, the O'Driscoll bus service from New Norfolk is not permitted to pick up passengers past Granton, a situation that particularly frustrates those waiting for a bus when Metro's busses are full and O'Driscoll's have to pass by with empty seats.

### **School buses:**

With over 400 individual contracts, each of which typically involves only two services a day, 40 weeks a year, the Tasmanian school bus sector is clearly an area ripe for exploration of options for creative use of excess capacity. However, the highly individualised capabilities and needs of operators and the communities they serve mean that these explorations will have to occur on a community-by-community basis.

### **Not-for-profit transport services:**

Not-for-profit services are of clear and enormous value to their clients. At the moment, however, it is not clear to what extent existing not-for-profit transport services would be adequate to meet full potential demand if all eligible persons who are currently transport-deprived—in other words, currently accessing neither for-profit nor not-for-profit services—were to begin to register their needs, let alone whether they have the capacity to address demand from segments of the community currently ineligible for their services.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the largest provider in the state (CTST) advertises only by word of mouth; cannot take (and therefore does not record) same-day requests after 1 pm in seven of its 11

A clear understanding of not-for-profit transport supply and demand at the regional/remote level will be necessary if not-for-profit operators are to move more into the role of open-access feeder services for commercial trunk routes.

### **Taxis:**

Potential exists for the taxi sector to play a notable role in addressing transport disadvantage in the state, increasing the profitability and viability of the sector and its operators in the process. At the moment, however, the situation is at an uncomfortable impasse.

On the one hand, in general the income of taxi drivers is relatively low, and low flag falls lead to a bias against short trips; on the other hand, the majority of transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians—particularly those living outside major urban areas, who often require longer trips—simply cannot afford current taxi prices on a regular basis, even with existing concessions.

Even were lower fares available, in many parts of the state taxis are thin on the ground: 13 of the state's 24 taxi regions have fewer than five licensees, an additional five have fewer than 10, and 436 out of the total of 563 licenses are held in Hobart (317) or Launceston (119). The Kentish taxi region, encompassing the tourist destination of Sheffield and surrounds, has no taxis at all.

This situation seems tailor-made for creative responses to emerge. On the one hand, there appear to be many opportunities, and no insurmountable legislative or regulatory barriers, for existing taxi operators to enter into contracts with bus companies to act as feeder services, or with service providers to act as a pick-up service.

It is worth noting that while not-for-profit transport services have the potential to play a highly valuable role as feeder services for trunk lines, use of these services alone for this function is potentially risky. Even now, there is no guarantee that a volunteer will be willing to drive at the hour necessary to link to a service. In the future, the situation may become even more uncertain.

- Tasmania's population is ageing, with implications for the size and capabilities both of the volunteer force and of the client group they are driving.
- A rise in the pension age appears possible, suggesting that many people will have to work longer, reducing their availability as volunteers.
- Although Australians are living longer, incidence of some activity-limiting chronic diseases is rising, with potential implications for the health of the volunteer force.<sup>7</sup>

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regions; and does not record requests that cannot be met due to lack of available volunteers.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014), *Australia's Health 2014*.  
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129547205>

Use of taxi services, however, has the potential to generate rural employment as well as avoiding these concerns.

On the other hand, in rural or other areas poorly serviced by taxis, there may be a legitimate place for ridesharing and carpooling-for-contribution apps such as Uber, Lyft and/or SideCar.

Such services can be far from ideal—for example, most rideshare vehicles are not disability-accessible—and their presence may prevent a better taxi service (for instance a wheelchair-accessible taxi) from establishing itself at a later date. Given the difficulty of licensing rideshare services to specific geographic areas (as is currently done with taxis), rideshare drivers may also tend to gravitate to where the most clients are located, in other words, to areas where taxis currently operate—a potentially highly contentious situation.

These problems notwithstanding, the fact remains that in an environment where many transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians cannot afford standard taxi fares or lack access to taxis in the first place, these services—as well as Facebook- and other social media-based informal services—are almost certainly going to be very difficult to ward off. The challenge therefore is to see whether such services might be able to be incorporated into the Tasmanian environment

Driving for such services in rural areas is unlikely to be very lucrative—a number of articles have pointed out that even driving full-time in a city is not likely to make you rich<sup>8</sup>--but may address rural underemployment, as is the case with many school bus drivers. The challenge will be to find ways in which these services can be used to complement, rather than crush, existing taxi services in addressing rural transport disadvantage.

At the same time, ridesharing services will not appeal to many existing and potential taxi customers, who value the well-trained and trustworthy drivers, the clean and comfortable vehicles, and the reliable service that taxi companies provide.

## **2. Innovations workshop**

The facilitation process described in the preceding section of this report provided the key barriers and opportunities to address in an innovations workshop hosted by TasCOSS on Friday 23 May 2014 in Hobart.

The innovations workshop brought together key Tasmanian stakeholders and leading innovators in the transport field. The morning session provided a series of presentations relating to key areas of opportunity in the Tasmanian transport landscape while the afternoon session workshopped these opportunities and developed practical strategies for a way forward.

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/how-much-you-earn-as-an-uber-driver-2014-6> or <http://lockerdom.com/6617943844990785/6752979160283924>

A list of participants is located in Schedule A attached to this report.

## 2.1 Presentations

Three presenters addressed attendees.

- *Professor Corinne Mulley* is the founding Chair in Public Transport at the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies at the University of Sydney. Her talk introduced the concept of Flexible Transport; laid out a variety of models of FT services that have been used in Australia and world-wide; and discussed key questions that must be addressed in designing a flexible transport system.
- *Jen Newman*, the southern representative of Regional Development Australia, Tasmania, and *Patrick Bruce*, Digital Marketing Advisor – Passenger Transport Victoria (PTV), spoke about creating a centralised passenger information website for Tasmania that shows the full range of commercial, public, not-for-profit and active transport options, including routes, fares, timetables.
- *John Pauley*, a project manager with Phoenix Coaches, spoke about an innovative project initiated by Phoenix Coaches/Merseylink and supported by the Tasmanian Government's Wheels for Work and Training fund. The key partners in the project are Metro and the Cradle Coast Authority.

Detailed summaries of the three presentations are presented in Schedule D.

## 2.2 Key insights

The following is TasCOSS' brief overview of key insights arising from the three presentations. Please see Schedule D for a more detailed description of the presentations.

### **Flexible transport**

Given the almost infinite diversity of potential flexible transport models, it seems highly likely that some form of open-access flexible transport model could be developed for Tasmanian applications. It is notable that worldwide, flexible transport systems have been developed to address most of the bottlenecks in Tasmania's passenger transport environment:

- Local and feeder services to trunk haul services
- Replacing low-frequency conventional services
- Replacing fixed routes in evening or weekends
- Services in low-density rural areas
- Efficiencies in social mobility resources

There would seem to be clear potential for building flexible transport services around existing transport providers, in particular taxis, as noted above. Of particular note,

rural taxi services are frequently under-used, in part due to the conflict between higher-than-average per-trip costs, due to greater distance, and the often lower-than-average incomes of potential users.

Contracting taxi services to provide flexible transport options would increase the viability of existing services and potentially lead to an expansion of services, not only benefiting those in need of transport but also potentially leading to greater rural employment. In areas where taxi services do not exist or where existing operators do not wish to take up flexible service contracts, the potential exists for the introduction of new operators, potentially including social enterprises—again potentially boosting rural employment.

Flexible services have a potential immediate urban applicability, given Metro's desire to carve services in Hobart's northern suburbs back to focus more on high-frequency trunk routes. While Metro's decisions are understandable, the changes will lead to greater transport disadvantage in the areas from which services have been withdrawn.

The development of flexible service models not only has the potential to address the needs of those who have been disadvantaged by these changes, but also may provide the opportunity for further streamlining of Metro services elsewhere without the resultant loss of access to transport overall—or the public backlash that invariably accompanies these types of cuts.

At the same time, an investment in the development of flexible transport systems in peri-urban and rural areas would provide a degree of equity in the public funding of passenger transport in the state. Currently, government funding for urban area bus services and general access services and for transport concessions, including concessional bus fares and taxi concessions, disproportionately benefit urban residents. The development of flexible transport options in peri-urban and rural areas has the potential to address this inequity.

As Professor Mulley noted, operators tend to be comfortable with their core business, so it will be important to provide evidence on the effectiveness and profitability of flexible services to operators and also demonstrate how flexible services can contribute to their core business.

### **Website**

Tasmania is the only Australian state to lack a website providing transport information for residents and tourists alike. A centralised passenger transport information website should be easily achievable, given the plethora of existing examples—with PTV's website a clear standout for its ease of use, level of detail, and inclusion of multiple modes of transport, including walking and cycling. A Tasmanian website should include the contact details of not-for-profit options and taxi companies as well—an option not available on the PTV website, but that should not be more challenging than providing directions for walking, as the PTV website does.

## Wheels for Work and Training

The Wheels for Work and Training project underway on the north coast will be a perfect opportunity to test out the potential for innovations such as flexible transport options.

The project, with its broad-ranging, inclusive vision for transport services, is precisely the kind of initiative that is needed in transport-disadvantaged regions of the state. TasCOSS' only reservation—a very slight one, given the clear high-mindedness, community spirit, and encompassing vision of the project's initiators—is that because the project has been initiated by a commercial service, its results may be slightly biased towards the commercial needs of that operator or mode. We emphasise that this is a very good project, and we are confident that it will lead to good results—but ideally, the development of a comprehensive transport plan for an area should be conducted by a party with no commercial interest in the results.

## 3. Project evaluation

### 3.1 Meeting and survey evaluation

An evaluation form was distributed at the regional meetings for participants to fill out on the spot or to mail in. Survey respondents were also asked for feedback on the conduct of the survey.

Overall, participant and respondent responses were very positive, with 73% of participants describing the sessions/survey as 'extremely/very relevant' and 90+% strongly agreeing/agreeing that sessions were clearly presented, had offered adequate time and opportunity for participation, and had led to a clearer understanding of issues around transport in the community, and that respondents were more likely to get involved in seeking out solutions to transport problems in the community.

One survey respondent suggested, however, that there had not been adequately diverse service and community participation at the St Helens meeting, and that next time it would be advisable to draw more heavily on the Break O'Day service network.

### 3.2 Innovations workshop evaluation

An evaluation form was distributed at the workshop for participants to fill out on the spot or to mail in. Participants were for the most part very positive about the session, with 75% of participants describing the session as 'extremely relevant/relevant' and all strongly agreeing/agreeing that the session was clearly presented and had offered adequate time and opportunity for participation.

Eighty percent of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that the session had led to a clearer understanding of issues around transport in the community, and 90% strongly

agreed/agreed that they were more likely to get involved in seeking out solutions to transport problems in the community.

## 4. Recommendations and rationales

The following are TasCOSS' recommendations for immediate, medium-term and longer-term action.

In the Grant Deed, TasCOSS undertook to engage in a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) to categorise results by region and to prioritise recommendations. In fact, the project's findings suggest that such an exercise would be best conducted in the context of integrated transport pilot projects (see Recommendation 2), as statewide mixes of transport disadvantage/government services/employment and training opportunities/transport options, and consequently of appropriate responses, are highly locally specific. However, we have tried to identify how each recommendation addresses the key barriers and opportunities identified in the facilitation meetings.

### 4.1 Immediate [2014-15]

**Recommendation 1:** *Finalise the creation of a centralised passenger transport website.*

All parties agree that a centralised passenger transport website has the potential to bring Tasmanians and tourists into contact with existing transport services—general access, private (bus and taxi), not-for-profit, car pooling, car sharing, and active transport—in their areas and to significantly simplify multi-modal or multi-operator trips. Progress has already been made towards this outcome, making it an easily achievable goal. Of particular value, Service Tasmania has expressed strong interest in hosting the site.

As noted at the innovations workshop:

- The website name and address should indicate the site's purpose and vision. Suggestions have included "Go Tasmania" and "GoTasGo."
- The overarching responsibility for creating and maintaining the web site should rest with one body with experience in providing information to the public, for instance Service Tasmania.
- The site must be designed for easy use by mobile phones.
- Information on the website's existence should be available in multiple languages, in keeping with the Tasmanian Multicultural Policy 2014. Organisations providing information to CALD groups should receive particular briefings on the website's use.
- A staged approach to the web site would be beneficial in order to get basic information up as soon as possible. For instance, it may be possible to begin with a Google Transit journey planner and other basic transport operator information.



- The final website should include a journey planner, routes and maps, timetables, and fares. It should include for-profit, not-for-profit, and active transport options, as well as information on ride-sharing and park'n'ride facilities and links to tourist information. An ability to search for landmarks would be a useful supplement for tourist use.
- Links to the journey planner should eventually be located on the widest possible range of websites, including schools, hospitals, government departments, councils, LINC's, Centrelink, Tourism Tasmania, major tourism businesses, festivals and events, etc.
- A backup phone number—for instance, the Service Tasmania phone number—will be crucial for those who cannot access the website due to internet connectivity or literacy issues.
- Councils, LINC's, community service organisations and other organisations providing information to the public should be briefed on the website's use so that they can provide information to callers as well. Local governments should include information on transport options on their websites and be prepared to train staff to use a centralized transport website (if this is created) to field phone enquiries.

As noted above, it is important that the web site gather the appropriate data to measure the degree of success of the web site and to identify areas for improvement. Information to be collected should include:

- Number of times users utilise each different function.
- Number of visitors and purpose for visiting website.
- Number of visitors by type of device used to access web site.
- Periodic surveys to measure satisfaction.
- Number of page views.
- Quarterly surveys measuring satisfaction.
- Name recognition of the web site for users of public transport.
- The percent of the public who use the website and who use public transport at least once a week.
- Website speed and health of the networks behind the web site.
- Periodic verification of the accuracy of information.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of information, better information for public, lack of/better integration of for-profit, not-for-profit and other transport options.**

**Recommendation 2:** *Undertake an integrated transport pilot project.*

Participants in this project were unanimous on one key point: the basic outlines of challenges facing transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians, and of solutions to these challenges, are already reasonably clear at the macro level. What is now necessary is to see how these challenges and solutions can be explored at the level of specific communities, each of which faces their own complex mix of transport disadvantage, government services, employment and training opportunities, and transport options. As one participant put it, "We know what the problem is. The question now is – what is the problem HERE?"

As noted above, initiatives have already been undertaken to answer this question in various parts of Tasmania. The Wheels for Work and Training project introduced at the project's innovations workshop and the collaboration between Tassielink and CTST on the state's east coast are examples of such admirable initiatives.

To capitalise on the lessons of these initiatives but also to move beyond operator-initiated projects, the Tasmanian Government should undertake a pilot project aimed at developing integrated, collaborative transport environments in two areas of the state: one rural and one urban/peri-urban.

The goal of the project should be not only to develop a more efficient, inclusive and coordinated provision of transport services in these areas—potentially including new flexible transport options—but also to change behaviour among existing and potential transport users as well as destination entities (schools, services, businesses) and local planners.

Such a project should:

- Create an audit of services available in an area and of major trip generators/attractors
- Conduct a needs analysis, drawing both on desktop research and local interviews
- Identify community champions
- Identify service gaps, unmet demand and necessary minimum service levels for contracted services
- Initiate and support ongoing communication between all key stakeholders
- Help negotiate collaborations, sharing of resources, and divisions of responsibility between different providers/services
- Help devise community engagement projects and public information/relations campaigns.

Such a project:

- Will require an ability to create temporary exemptions or suspensions of some existing regulations, to be identified on a case-by-case basis.
- Will need to address potential competition between various transport options and work to create win-win solutions.

Such a project does not need to be expensive; the Social Inclusion Unit in DPAC can provide figures for the Wheels for Work and Training grant in the North West. The results of the pilot project should provide be useable to roll out further such projects in other parts of the state, reducing the additional costs of each further project. Given the potential for increased patronage, both for-profit and not-for-profit services might be willing to provide at least in-kind support.

Such a project will be by its nature complex, bringing together a wide range of agencies/organisations/businesses with different agendas, funding, needs, values and abilities, as well as local communities and transport users themselves. One has only to refer to the list of individuals and organisations that workshop attendees identified as key in creating a local transport plan to gain an idea of the scope of at least initial the discussions such a project would involve.

TasCOSS would argue that such a project is most likely to deliver long-term, sustainable solutions if it follows the principles of the Collective Impact model for collaboration, as well as innovative stakeholder engagement tools.<sup>9</sup>

The key aspects of a collective impact approach include the following:

- Agreement on a common agenda and vision.
- Shared measurement systems that use a consistent approach to collecting data and measuring outcomes.
- Mutually reinforcing activities by all participants
- Continuous and open communication
- Existence of a 'backbone' organisation providing ongoing support and management of the project.

The results of the workshops point the way to these discussions (see Schedule C).

In the short term, the State Government should create a steering committee, probably best managed out of DPAC, bringing together relevant government and non-government stakeholders and transport operators/representatives to discuss the way forward.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of coordination between institutions/service providers/transport providers, better coordination between the above, better integration of for-profit, not-for-profit and other transport options, better integration of timetables and planning, new types of services.**

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the Collective Impact approach, see [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact). For an example of innovative stakeholder engagement tools, see Jones, Peter (2011) "Developing and applying interactive visual tools to enhance stakeholder engagement in accessibility planning for mobility disadvantaged groups," *Research in Transportation Business and Management*, 2, pp. 29-41.

**Recommendation 3:** *Advocate with the Commonwealth for a not-for-profit transport system accessible to all.*

As noted above, too many transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians—including many younger people who are not yet eligible to drive or who cannot yet afford a vehicle, but who are expected to be participating in work or training—both live outside the catchment of scheduled route services, cannot afford existing taxi fares, and are not formally eligible to use existing not-for-profit transport options.<sup>10</sup> Their inability to access not-for-profit transport affects not only their personal circumstances and futures, but the economic and social future of the state.

Meanwhile, both for-profit and not-for-profit services lose out on potential fares, keeping them from growing their services, leaving them more dependent on continued government funding, and in some cases threatening their viability .

TasCOSS strongly argues that if this perverse situation is to be overcome, a shift in mindset is required, away from providing transport for certain eligible groups and towards creating a transport system that is accessible to all. It is worth noting that consolidation of resources towards the creation of more effective transport services for physically and economically transport-disadvantaged groups alike has been a feature of other national approaches, for example in the United Kingdom and the United States, for some time.<sup>11</sup>

We strongly urge that the Tasmanian Government initiate negotiations with relevant Federal departments to discuss ways in which to circumvent or overcome legislative and funding barriers, particularly in relation to the HACC system, that currently stymie the development of open-eligibility flexible transport options, as well as to discuss the creation of consolidated funding pools for flexible transport. Given the Federal government's strong desire to see more Tasmanians participating in employment and training, this may be an opportune moment to explore the possibility of using Tasmania as a site for experimenting with changes that may eventually prove useful at the national level.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of communication between funders, coordination of planning, new types of services.**

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<sup>10</sup> While HACC services can in principle transport non-HACC clients provided that a HACC client is not disadvantaged, the priority given to HACC clients means that a provider cannot reasonably be expected to take a booking for a non-HACC user, given that a HACC client might require a service at the last minute.

<sup>11</sup> For a success story from the UK, see James, N and C Waldron (2011), "Improving access to employment and training in former coalfields areas in the UK: the Access Alliance Programme," *Research in Transportation Business and Management*, 2, pp. 20-28. For examples from the US, see <http://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Henrika1.pdf>

**Recommendation 4:** *Create a state-wide Mobility Manager.*

As noted in the Phase I report, transport falls across many departments and levels of government; no single body has an overview of the whole sector or of all transport-related policy initiatives, making it difficult to achieve a coordinated approach.

It is difficult to imagine, for instance, how in the current environment the State government could promote the consistent suggestion that all institutions and major businesses should have travel plans, given that at least five different departments (DSG, Education, DHHS, State Growth and DPAC) would have to be involved.

Some form of centralised oversight and a degree of strategic consistency will be necessary if all government bodies, as well as all parts of the transport spectrum, are to work towards the same goals in overcoming transport disadvantage and furthering social inclusion.

In the short term, the Tasmanian Government should:

- Create a new position of state-wide Mobility Manager, with responsibility for coordinating policy, strategy, funding, services and resource-sharing across government departments, the full range of transport providers, planning bodies, and local government. Such a position could be situated in DSG or, given its social inclusion function, in DPAC.
- Create a transport focal position in each human services-oriented department—DHHS, Education—with the role of encouraging all institutions within the department's remit to:
  - Draw up transport needs/gap assessments
  - Create transport access plans
  - Provide information to clients on transport options.

These options should be thought of as nested, rather than mutually exclusive.

**A sample State-wide Mobility Manager position description<sup>12</sup>**

**Description:**

The [Iowa] State-wide Mobility Manager will work to improve overall mobility for the general public, with an emphasis on the elderly, low-income persons, and/or persons with disabilities. A mobility manager's focus is on the movement of people rather than vehicles and on the entire trip, not just one mode or another.

**Scope of work:**

- Cultivate partnerships and multi-agency coordinated transportation activities.
- Research needs and demands for users, identify funding alternatives, review regulatory processes, facilitate communications between agencies, and develop incentives to encourage agency participation as needed.

<sup>12</sup> Abbreviated from

[http://www.iarcog.com/Statewide\\_Mobility\\_Manager\\_job\\_description.pdf](http://www.iarcog.com/Statewide_Mobility_Manager_job_description.pdf)

- Research mobility management innovations around the country. Remain current on best practices and concepts of mobility management.
- Assist public transit agencies and human service agencies to create their own mobility focal positions.
- Provide training for focal positions on a variety of mobility-related topics.
- Develop educational programs such as rider training materials, travel trainer programs and community forums.
- Develop new ways to remove barriers for transportation to and from jobs and employment support services for individuals with disabilities in rural areas.
- Maintain communication with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private interests.
- Make presentations to and attend meetings of a variety of groups, cities, counties, organizations, boards, and committees with passenger transportation links to promote coordination amongst agencies.

Beyond the creation of a state-level mobility manager, regional areas would benefit from regional mobility manager positions as well. Such positions could be shared among several councils or sit at the level of the relevant regional body (STCA etc.).

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of coordination between funders/institutions and service providers/transport providers, better integration of transport options, better information for providers, coordination and integration of timetables/planning.**

**Recommendation 5:** *Develop transport access plans.*

As the above suggests, all government facilities that serve the public, both state and local, should have an idea of how their clients reach them. For a quick survey, institutions can employ a simple mapping technique asking clients to place different coloured stickers representing different modes on a map to indicate their place of origin and the mode they used (for example, drove yourself/someone else drove you/bus/not-for-profit/taxi/walk/bicycle/motorcycle). Hospitals should also follow up on why patients miss appointments. The information gathered in these efforts should be used to help guide both transport service delivery and government service delivery (for instance, in shaping both bus routes/timetables and office opening times/appointment times).

To help facilities get a snapshot of their clients' access issues, a two-week trial survey could be a start.

**Barriers/opportunities address: Lack of coordination between institutions/service providers and transport providers, lack of information on real vs. perceived needs, better information for public.**

**Recommendation 6:** *Adopt a whole-of-government, evidence-based Transport Access Strategy.*

TasCOSS welcomes the commitment by the Tasmanian Government to develop a Transport Access Strategy for the state. The state's three existing regional integrated transport plans use different criteria and approaches and lack a unifying framework, and none is strong at explicitly integrating not-for-profit transport.

We urge the Government to take a whole-of-government approach in development of the new Strategy to ensure that all aspects of government policy are working in harmony. Development of the new Strategy should be guided by a steering committee bringing together all relevant government departments (State Growth, DHHS, Education, DPAC), as well as transport operators, community sector representatives and business representatives.

Given the importance of spatial planning and settlement patterns to transport issues, development of the new Strategy should be explicitly linked to the development of the new Affordable Housing Plan and to the review of the state's planning system, as well as to the three existing Regional Land Use Strategies and other state and local government liveability strategies addressing such issues as the provision of footpaths and bikeways.

To ensure that the new Strategy meets state and federal objectives by improving access to work and training for Tasmanians who may not have access to a car, we also urge the government to take the time to ensure that the new strategy is evidence-based, supported by good mapping not only of settlement and demographic patterns but also the location of jobs, training, health facilities and childcare, as well as other statistical information (for example, the percentage of local workers working non-standard hours).

We note, for instance, that entry-level jobs often are located in suburban areas and require early, late or weekend work; employment-related trips are also often complex, involving multiple destinations including childcare facilities or other services.<sup>13</sup>

We also urge the Strategy's developers to fully integrate not-for-profit transport services in their assessment and recommendations, and to consider the role that such services can play in addressing the needs of people whose transport disadvantage stems from low incomes.

It is worth noting that since 2005, a precondition for certain types of US federal transport funding has been the local development of a coordinated plan addressing the ability of existing public and not-for-profit transport services to meet the transportation needs of people with disabilities, older people, and people with low incomes. Coordinated plans are required to map and identify these groups'

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093\\_3550.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3550.html)

needs, to provide strategies for meeting these needs, and to prioritise transport services for funding and implementation.<sup>14</sup>

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of coordination in planning/service provision, lack of coordination between funders, lack of information on real vs. perceived needs, better integration of transport options, better coordination and integration of planning, new types of services.**

**Recommendation 7:** *Create incentives to increase public service passenger transport uptake.*

If public and commercial transport operators are not only to remain financially viable but to expand and improve their services for transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians, they need steady ridership, including full-fare passengers. The Tasmanian Government should use its position as the state's largest employer to help bolster transport operators' viability by creating and expanding incentives for public servants to use passenger transport, for instance through salary packaging arrangements.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of funding.**

#### 4.2 Medium-term [2015-17]

**Recommendation 8:** *Increase funding for passenger transport in the 2015-18 Budgets by 10% per annum.*

TasCOSS' brief in this project was to identify measures that could be achieved by redirecting existing resources. However, it would be irresponsible not to note that significant improvements are unlikely to occur at existing funding levels.

As noted above, in recent years, Tasmania has spent roughly \$200 per capita per annum on public transport infrastructure and services. While TasCOSS appreciates the budget constraints facing the Tasmanian Government, these levels of funding are highly unlikely to be achieve the innovative expansion of services that will be necessary to overcome transport disadvantage and underpin increased training and employment in the state. This is particularly the case given the evidence, as presented at the innovations workshop, that the development of flexible services frequently requires additional initial investment, since such services take time to build patronage.

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<sup>14</sup> For a sample plan, see:

[http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/Rhode\\_Island\\_coordinated\\_plan\\_01feb2013.pdf](http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/Rhode_Island_coordinated_plan_01feb2013.pdf)



The Tasmanian Government should raise its expenditure by a minimum of 10% per annum over three years. This level of increase would bring Tasmania's per capita funding to around \$250 per capita—still below the lowest national comparison (the Northern Territory), but at least an improvement on the current situation.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of funding.**

**Recommendation 9:** *Support the development of technical mechanisms for better integration and coordination.*

Given that few transport providers are in the position of being able to sustainably provide door-to-destination services for all potential users, enhanced integration between existing services and sectors can only benefit transport users and providers alike.

As discussed in the Tasmanian Bus Association's Moving People report and the recent Review of HACC non-emergency and community transport as well as in this project's meetings, key inter- and intra-sectoral areas for improved coordination and integration include:

- Integrated ticketing and/or payment mechanisms between different bus operators (in particular Metro and the other general access services) and between bus and not-for-profit transport operators.<sup>15</sup>
- A mechanism such as a centralised information and fleet management system for not-for-profit operators, to facilitate effective trip allocation among multiple providers and create back-up options when any one service is fully booked.
- Integration of new transport technologies—GSP and SMS services, for instance—to improve real-time information for users.

State government assistance and incentives are likely to be necessary to help develop such technical support options and to encourage or enable transport providers to take them up.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of/better coordination between for-profit, not-for-profit and other transport options, new types of services.**

**Recommendation 10:** *Develop regulatory strategies for dealing with the rise of ridesharing apps while helping the taxi sector face the app-driven future.*

As noted above, ridesharing apps such as Uber, Lyft and/or SideCar are going to be very difficult and expensive to ward off in the long run, but also have the potential to open up new options for feeder services in areas poorly serviced by taxis. The California Public Utilities Commission took the step in 2013 of creating a new

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<sup>15</sup> For an example of a smart card useable on both bus and not-for-profit services, see the Rural Wheels example cited in Brake, J, C Mulley and J Nelson (2006), *Good practice guide for demand-responsive transport systems using telematics*. University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

definition—Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)—for such entities and of establishing regulations for their operation, including safety and insurance requirements.<sup>16</sup> The Tasmanian Government should take a similar tack, while at the same time working with the taxi sector to develop a proactive, creative, win-win response to the rise of app- and social media- based ridesharing.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: New types of services.**

### 4.3 Longer term [2016-18]

**Recommendation 11:** *Change bus funding/contracting models and conditions.*

As noted above, current bus funding/contracting models do not leave room for the government to adjust service offerings to changed needs. There is need for a funding/contracting model with flexibility to review service offerings at the Department of State Growth's initiative and in consultation with bus operators and communities. Such reforms should be undertaken in the context of formulating post-2018/19 contracts, and will need to be accompanied by imaginative and coordinated planning.

As recommended by the Tasmanian Bus Association, minimum service levels also should be set for areas of operation, in accordance with identified needs and demands and in consultation with bus operators, communities and major trip attractors (e.g. government services serving the area). Meanwhile, it will be necessary to revisit some urban fringe contracts to see if pick-up/set-down exclusion zones can be lifted.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of information on real vs. perceived needs, lack of coordination between institutions/service providers and transport providers.**

**Recommendation 12:** *Develop transport infrastructure and hubs.*

At the most basic level, the lack of bus stops/shelters across the state not only severely complicates the life of existing passenger transport users and discourages better passenger transport uptake, but also stands in the way of the use of smaller services as feeder services for larger route services.

At the higher end, Tasmania conspicuously lacks multimodal passenger hubs in most cities and towns. This situation not only makes life difficult for existing passengers, but also works against passenger transport uptake in a variety of ways.

- Potential patrons lack centralised, comfortable, safe environments in which to wait for passenger transport options .

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/1788F1F1-EA38-4B68-B221-4116994F2252/0/TNC\\_App\\_Instctns.pdf](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/1788F1F1-EA38-4B68-B221-4116994F2252/0/TNC_App_Instctns.pdf)

- Transfers between services are slow and inefficient.
- People sometimes are left stranded if they wait for a service at the wrong stop.

The existing situation also fails to capitalise on the commercial potential of such hubs.

To address these issues:

- State and local governments and transport operators should work together to ensure that all bus stops in the state include basic shelter as well as information on providers (to keep people from waiting at the wrong stop), routes and timetables.

As the Tasmanian Bus Association has suggested, consistent design and branding of bus stops across the state would help develop awareness of services among locals and tourists alike.

- The development of multimodal passenger hubs in cities and towns around Tasmania should aim to provide fast and efficient transfers as well as comfortable and convenient facilities for all modes of transport including active transport. The proposed Hobart CBD Bus Interchange is an example of such a project; unfortunately, it has not proceeded past the design stage, with no funding currently allocated for further development.

Locations for hub investment should be selected from areas that will be experiencing significant growth in traffic flow over the next decade and that contain significant traffic bottlenecks, such as the Huonville-Kingston-Hobart corridor. Such hubs can provide space for community centres or child care centres as well as for commercial space.<sup>17</sup>

In both instances, state and local governments should work with organisations such as Regional Development Australia to explore opportunities for matching Federal funding.

Meanwhile, as noted by both the not-for-profit and taxi sectors, most urban areas of Tasmania have a dire shortage of places to drop off mobility-limited clients. All local governments should increase the supply of three-minute drop-off spots in commercial areas, near health facilities and chemists, and near bus stops, as well as the supply of disability parking spaces in these areas.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of/better coordination in planning, better integration of for-profit, not-for-profit and other transport options.**

**Recommendation 13:** *Create a statutory authority for managing and coordinating passenger transport.*

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the approaches taken in the United States by the Mason County Transit-Community Centre (<http://www.masontransit.org/community/ctransctr.html>) or Prairie Hills Transit (<http://www.prairiehillstransit.com/>).

While the creation of a Mobility Manager position will be an important start towards improving integration among the state's transport options, over the longer term, the Tasmanian Government should investigate the creation of a statutory authority with responsibility for managing and coordinating all aspects of passenger transport. Such an authority could have overarching responsibility for negotiation and management of service contracts, development and rollout of integrated ticketing, coordination of infrastructure provision, and creation/management of information services such as the website.

Public Transport Victoria, which was created in 2012 by merging different functions within different agencies into one statutory authority, is an example of such an approach. Such an authority should move beyond PTV's approach, however, by explicitly including not-for-profit transport in its remit.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of coordination between funders/institutions and service providers/transport providers, better integration of transport options, better information for providers, coordination and integration of timetables/planning.**

#### 4.4 For transport operators

**Recommendation 14:** *Develop user advisory councils.*

As noted, all parties to the transport system need to work to focus on real, rather than perceived or historical client needs. All transport modes would benefit from the development of user advisory councils that bring together transport users as well as representatives of all relevant government departments, community sector groups, and business representatives.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of information on real vs. perceived needs.**

**Recommendation 15:** *Improve Metro's consultation and communication.*

While Metro's imperatives for recent changes to routes and schedules are clear, passengers have largely been taken by surprise, with predictably negative responses. In the future, Metro should engage in public consultation before, rather than after development of changes in routes/timetables to ensure that community needs and concerns are canvassed at a point in the process where they can be more easily incorporated.

New migrants and humanitarian entrants, many of whom depend on public transport, would also benefit from Metro working more directly with CALD groups and key user groups to publicise information about services.

Of course, all other bus companies will also benefit from good public consultation and communication processes.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of information for users, lack of information on real vs. perceived needs, coordination of timetables.**

**Recommendation 16:** *Support the development of a centralised transport website .*

Development and continued operation of a centralised website will require the active cooperation of transport service providers. Operators should be certain that up-to-date route, timetable and fare information is provided promptly to website developers and available on their own websites.

In the meantime, operators should follow the example of Metro and others and put their information on Google Transit.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of/better information for the public.**

**Recommendation 17:** *Develop better communication between bus companies and between bus and taxis.*

There is a strong need for all bus services to ensure connecting passengers' successful transfer between services. Regional meeting participants shared discouraging stories about some passengers being dropped off at the wrong stop to catch a connecting service and others being dropped off without any effort to ensure that their connecting service had not already left. Taxis could be waiting for bus passengers, particularly at night.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of/improved coordination and integration of timetables.**

**Recommendation 18:** *Promote collaboration and shared strategic planning among not-for-profit transport operators.*

Many operators in the highly fragmented not-for-profit transport sector have the potential to benefit strongly from more frequent communication, more active collaboration and resource-sharing, and shared strategic planning. Groups of not-for-profit operators could, for instance, leverage better deals for defensive driving courses for drivers; pool vehicles, volunteers, and/or training; or work out systems for referrals of clients who cannot be served due to capacity constraints. Given the lack of a clear point of initiation in government, sector operators are likely to have to take the initiative themselves, possibly via impartial facilitation.

**Barriers/opportunities addressed: Lack of/better coordination between transport providers.**

## Schedule A- Meeting schedules and attendees

Table 1 – Schedule of Regional Meetings

Region	Date	Participants
South - Hobart	3/2/14	Key stakeholders state-wide
Northeast – St Helens	10/2/14	Local government/ bus / taxi/ not-for-profit transport operators/ CSOs
North - Launceston	11/2/14	Local government/ bus/ taxi/ not-for-profit transport operators/CSOs
Northwest – Burnie	12/2/14, 13/2/14	Local government/ Bus/ taxi/ not-for-profit transport operators/ CSOs
South – Huonville	12/3/14	Local government/ Bus/ taxi/ not-for-profit transport operators/ CSOs

Table 2 – Schedule of Transport Sector Meetings

Sector	Date	Venue and Time
Not-for-profit	17/3/14	TasCOSS Conference Room and by teleconference
Bus	31/3/14	TasCOSS Conference Room and by teleconference
Taxi	2/4/14	TasCOSS Conference Room

Table 3 -- List of attendees by meeting

Key Stakeholders Initial Meeting Date: 3 February 2014; Venue: Hobart	
Surname, Name	Organisations
Andrew, Nick	Skills Tasmania
Biddle, Simon	DIER
Bond, Susie	The Smith Family
Bridges, Stuart	RACT
Buttermore, Erin	DPAC (TCCO)
Carty, Janet	Ambulance Tas
Cotgrove, Bob	Retired Academic (UTAS)

Crane, Liz	TaCH
Dewsbery, Shane	Tassielink Transit
Edwards, Wendy	Community Transport Tas
Farrell, Craig	
Gardiner, David	ATDC
Grace, Martin	DIER
Grace, Shirley	Dept of Employment
Grice, Sharon	Red Cross
Gutierrez, Luis	DIER
Hiruy, Kiros	DEDTA
Hope, David	DIER
James, Anthony	Metro
Lewis, Deb	COTA
Lewis, Geoff	Tas Bus
Lyth, Anna	UTAS & Tas Climate Action Council
Marris, Kate	Metro
McGregor, Jess	Baptcare
McNamee	Cancer Council TAS
Pharo, Emma	Bicycle Tasmania
Roe, Jonathan	DPAC
Webber, Steve	DHHS
White, Gerry	Colony 47
Williams, Shane	Dept of Employment

**Innovations Workshop****Date: 23 May 2014; Venue: SI - Hobart**

<b>Surname, Name</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Chilcott, Mark	DPIPWE
Crice, Sharon	Red Cross
Dewsbery, Shane	Tassielink Transit
Dranx, David	COTA
Gregson, John	DIER
Hiruy, Kiros	DEDTA
Hope, David	DIER
James, Anthony	Metro
Marris, Kate	Metro
McNamee, L	Cancer Council TAS
Meads, Babette	DIER
Mousavi, Amir	Glenorchy City Council
Myers, Marrie	COTA
Peterson, Corey	UTAS
Rose, T	Tasmanian Medicare Local
Sward, Donna	RACT
Taskunas, Vince	Office of Minister Hidding
Wilkinson, Helen	DSS
Williams, Shane	Department of Education

**Bus Sector meeting****Date: 31 March 2014; Venue: Hobart**

<b>Surname, Name</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Dewsbery, Shane	Tassielink Transit
James, Anthony	Metro
Lewis, Geoff	Tas Bus
Marris, Kate	Metro
Mills, Larry	Tas Redline Coaches
Nettlefold, Petrina	Department of Education
Sydes, Peter	Tas Redline Coaches

**Taxi Sector meeting****Date: 2 April 2014; Venue: Hobart**

<b>Surname, Name</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Butler, Ross	United Taxi
Cheetham, Steve	United Taxi
Burdon, Roger	Yellow Cabs (separate meeting at Roger's Office)



<b>St Helens meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 10 February 2014</b>	
<b>Surname, Name</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Aulich, Wendy	Family Based Care
Barden, Lianne	Healthy House
Butler, Heather	SADHS Association
Hughes, Chris	Break O'Day Council
McMurtrie, Gary	Healthy House
Saunders, Jan	Community Transport
Williams, Pauline	St Helens Community Car
<b>Launceston meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 11 February 2014</b>	
<b>Surname, Name</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Ali, John	Migrant Resource Centre
Coates, Nigel	Launceston City Council
Howard, Dhana	Toosey Aged Care
Jacobs, Jodie	The Smith Family
Newman, Jen	RDA
Servant, Nathalie	Launceston City Council
Tams, Harry	Youth Futures Inc
Turner, Kevin	RDA
<b>Burnie meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 12 February 2014</b>	
<b>Surname, Name</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Bingley, Jan	Phoenix Coaches
Brindley, Mike	RDA
Doherty, Doug	Family Based Care North West
Friedersdorff, Alwyn	COTA
<b>Huonville meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 12 March 2014</b>	
<b>Surname, Name</b>	<b>Organisations</b>
Dewsbery, Shane	Tassielink Transit
Eastley, Dale	MS Tas
Evans, Di	Huon Valley Council, Family Services
Gill, Rhoda	Multiple Steps Forward
Grice, Sharon	Red Cross
Hoodland-Murphy, Frances	Huon Hearing Centre
McLean, Annie	Commissioner for Children
Nettlefold, Petrina	Department of Education
Wehnert, Jennifer	Relationships Australia

## Schedule B – Key points from regional/sectoral meetings and survey

The following are the key points raised at the regional and sectoral meetings and in the survey. Please note that these reflect the opinions of meeting attendees and survey respondents, and do not necessarily reflect the views of TasCOSS.

### General

- All modes of transport should be thought of as **complementary rather than in competition**. By the same logic, rather than thinking of individual clients as siloed into exclusive use of particular modes, there is a need to ensure that **clients can move smoothly across modes** to the greatest extent practicable.
- There is a desperate need for a **centralised information point for the travelling public**, such as a website. Such a site would enable passengers to identify and access the full range of transport services—public, commercial, not-for-profit, car pooling and car sharing, and active transport—available in their communities.
- Some people who are transport-disadvantaged **can't use the internet**, due to a lack of connectivity, visual impairment, or lack of internet skills. A centralised information point **must include a phone contact**.
- Certain groups—**CALD communities, for example**—are in particular need of better information, suggesting the need for targeted information campaigns. Timetables require a reasonable degree of English **literacy**—they are potentially difficult for kids.
- Different criteria and prices make it very hard for a consumer to figure out what they're **eligible** for and what will be the most **affordable** option that fits their needs.
- Institutions—hospitals, medical centres, schools, LINCS, government departments—do not have **transport access plans**. As a consequence, services and programs are often rolled out with no clear concept of how people are going to get to them or of their impact on existing transport arrangements.
- **Institutions do not provide enough information** on transport options. Hospitals, medical centres, schools, and other institutions could provide information on transport options, including on the nearest bus stops, taxi ranks/ services, and not-for-profit options, on their websites as well as at their information desks.
- **Infrastructure** is badly needed: transport hubs, bus stops/shelters, park and ride facilities, disability/drop-off parking for aged passengers. The existence of transport hubs where people can wait in comfort would make it possible for taxis and not-for-profit services to act as feeder services to scheduled services, as well as facilitating connections between bus services. Blades can identify all bus services as well as taxi/not-for-profit drop-off services.
- There is a need to capture those who are **newly transport-disadvantaged** due to license loss or illness. GPs, hospitals and courts

could hand out information on not-for-profit transport services or inform people of the existence of a transport website, if this is created.

- **Behaviour change** by the travelling public will be necessary if services are to be viable. Transport providers, state and local governments, and community groups will have to work together to bring people around to using passenger transport. However, there is no point in trying to instigate behaviour change if services aren't there.
- All sectoral representatives as well as attendees at the regional meetings emphasised that there is a need for government departments to be working together — **common policy and coordination** are necessary.
- There is a strong need for a **state-wide needs and gap analysis**, along the lines of the excellent work done in the background paper for the Greater Launceston Metropolitan Passenger Transport Plan.
- Space remains for trials of **ferry services** with state or local government funding. Ferry services could be a tourism draw as well as serving locals.
- There is a sharp **shortage not only of disability access parking, but also drop-off zones**, across the state, a situation that affects both the not-for-profit and taxi sectors. This is a particular problem given the state's ageing population. One not-for-profit has applied to allow their vehicles to park in loading zones in order to assist people with disabilities.

## Rural/regional

- There is a need for **increased and improved services for rural areas and urban fringe** outside school bus services/morning and afternoon peak hours.
- **Different communities exhibit different levels of information-sharing**. Some communities already have focal points for sharing information on local transport options: Huon Valley Council, for instance, has links to bus (Tassielink and Metro) timetables on its website. Other communities, however, are less organised and information-sharing is minimal.
- **Community champions** are key – both in terms of promoting use and in terms of a regional backbone organisation. These will be different for each community.
- The prospects for **cooperation among not-for-profits** are better in rural areas. Organisations are referring clients who can't be served to other organisations.
- There is a need to **avoid competition** at all costs—providers must work together, rather than against each other.
- **Volunteer issues are particularly critical** in rural and regional settings. Regional communities face declining populations and increased needs in relation to the elderly and other transport-disadvantaged people.

## Not-for-profit sector

- Changes to the **Passenger Transport Services Act** regarding accreditation of smaller vehicles are causing major problems for many organisations. These changes

are reducing some organisations' ability to provide transport.

- **The current not-for-profit transport system focuses too much on certain groups of people, rather than making the whole system accessible to as many people as possible.** Too many people are deprived of the opportunity to use particular forms of transport because they do not meet eligibility criteria.
- There is a need for an assessment of **unmet demand**. Some organisations are doing a better job than others of recording unmet demand. Needed for planning purposes.
- There is a need for a **comprehensive audit** of all vehicles that are providing transport, either as direct transport services or embedded in service delivery, both HACC-funded and non-HACC funded.
- **Volunteers** are the key issue. There is a need for training, sharing of volunteers if possible. Good driver education is crucial to the safety of clients as well as the general public.
- The not-for-profit sector has the potential to **play a feeder role**, particularly in rural areas.
- Significant **potential exists for better cooperation and coordination** among not-for-profit services, especially in regional areas. Some organisations are already **referring clients** on when they can't meet demand—this could be formalised around the state to improve use of existing resources.
- There is a desperate need for **reform in the structure of funding** in

the sector—the provision of services is currently driven by funding, rather than by desired outcomes.

- The current system focuses too much on particular groups, rather than on creating **a system accessible** to as many people as possible.
- There is a trend towards the sector becoming an **enabler for medical providers** by working more closely with them and allocating resources accordingly. This works well for those needing to access those services, but may divert resources from other uses or bias the choice of vehicles.
- There is no point in funding a vehicle if there is no **funding for depreciation**.
- There is a need for across-the-board **pricing**.
- There is a need for more vehicles that can accommodate people in **wheelchairs and the obese** population. In many instances, a wheelchair-accessible vehicle exists but can only take a few chairs at a time.
- The presence of **vehicles that are cross-subsidised** from other services diminishes the viability of all services in the area. There is a tendency for CSOs who provide social activities to branch out into transport—which often involves drivers having to provide general assistance that they are not trained in.
- Tassielink and CTST have worked a way to create a single fare and ticketing system—shows that it's possible.

- Allocation of community vehicles has all too often been ad hoc, with no coordination between service providers or analysis of what already exists and how to enhance existing capacity. There are spare cars sloshing around that weren't funded for depreciation and continued operation.
- Ensuring that wheelchair passengers can both find a wheelchair-accessible not-for-profit feeder and a wheelchair-accessible bus complicates the idea of not-for-profit feeders for route services. Wheelchair passengers also face a lack of safe kerbing when exiting buses.

### Bus sector

- There is a strong need for **integrated ticketing**.
- There is a strong need for **adequate public consultation** before schedules are changed. Transport operators do not always understand the impact of changes on their clients. There is also a need for better public consultation in relation to what routes and times wheelchair-accessible busses will follow.
- The **disproportion between ticket prices for Metro users and for users of private services** disadvantages Tasmanians living outside Hobart/Launceston/Devonport/Burnie.
- There is a strong need for all bus services **to ensure connecting passengers' successful transfer** between services. Regional meeting participants shared discouraging stories about some passengers being dropped off at the wrong stop to catch a connecting service and others

being dropped off without any effort to ensure that their connecting service had not already left.

- There is a **lack of public clarity about Metro's role**; there is uncertainty as to whether the mandate is to maximise revenue and cost recovery or to provide a social service.
- Overall, the **contract management process** is an area for improvement. It would be possible to simplify the process and number of contracts to reduce complexity and focus on key performance metrics.
- **Common promotion** of the bus sector would be useful. For example, Victoria uses uniform branding of bus services, with blades at bus stops colour-coded to indicate different types of services and service providers.
- **Communication between schools and school bus operators could be improved**. For instance, schools should be communicating with bus operators to let them know when enrolments are projected to increase to ensure adequate capacity on routes (see the recent example of Tarooma High School).
- **There should be a review of what constitutes a "home area" for each school in order to ensure that transport resources are being allocated efficiently**. Bus operators noted that providing services for students who live a significant distance from the school they are attending represents a significant logistical challenge and argued that this is not an effective use of resources.

## Taxi sector

- The lack of an effective peak body for the taxi sector disadvantages and marginalises the industry in multi-sectoral initiatives. The industry needs an effective organisation to act as an advocate for its employees, businesses and customers.
- Participants had **different views re multi-hiring** – some felt it was obviously beneficial, while others were opposed.
- The current taxi **fare increase mechanism is ad hoc** and requires a more systematic, predictable and transparent approach. In at least one year the increase was less than the CPI.
- Regional licences are close to free, and yet many regional areas don't have access to taxis. This suggests an **opportunity for social enterprise** or a new business model.
- There are opportunities for **better communication** between taxis and busses so that taxis could be waiting for bus passengers. This would improve safety and convenience, especially at night.
- There is a need to address the **inherent competition** between community provision of free/subsidised transport and privately operated taxi services.
- Taxi drivers are already **very poorly paid**. As a consequence, a shortage of drivers is looming.
- There has been no recent study of who is using taxis and why. This type of data would be useful for industry planning purposes as well as for identifying passenger needs.

- Short trips currently are not attractive to cab drivers because the flag fall is low, leading to taxis lining up for longer runs like the airport-to-city run.
- Wheelchair-accessible taxis are **almost totally absent** outside Hobart, Launceston and Devonport.

## Other motor vehicle use

- **Park and ride** facilities are lacking.
- The car is the only realistic option in many parts of rural Tasmania. However, **learner driver programs are expensive and take a long time**. This situation is very hard on young people and new arrivals.

## Service gaps

Key service gaps and areas of unmet need identified by respondents included:

- Devonport
- Latrobe, Shearwater & Port Sorell area
- North West regions - rural communities in particular
- Northeast/Break O'Day
- West Tamar
- Night travel in the northern suburbs of Hobart
- East Devonport
- Meander Valley LGA. One respondent noted that buses passing through smaller towns are sometimes already full, limiting transport between those towns.
- Gagebrook/Herdsman's Cove
- Fingal to St Helens
- Kingston-Blackmans Bay
- Midway Pt, Sorell, Richmond (including to Sorrell)
- Campbelltown
- Huon Valley

## Schedule C – Workshop results

Meeting attendees and respondents identified an extensive list of individuals and organisations that would need to be included in consultations on developing a local transport plan.

### ➤ **Critical organisations to include on local transport stakeholder committees**

- Local public, commercial and not-for-profit transport providers - buses, taxi, CTST, Red Cross, Cancer Council, other health-related transport providers, school buses, Cars for Communities
- Local community sector service providers/organisations - relevant state-wide as well as local providers, local Community or Neighbourhood Houses
- RACT, local driver training organisations, Bicycle Tasmania
- Local and regional education and training organisations - local schools, regional colleges, local and regional RTOs, TAFE, UTas
- Local and regional health care providers - local clinics, regional/major hospitals, specialised health service providers (eye, kidney, cancer therapy)
- Medicare Local/Primary Health Organisation
- Aged and disability care service providers and facilities, HACC
- Local employment services and NILS providers
- Local community-based organisations - youth and sporting organisations, churches, Neighbourhood Watch, cultural/recreational/service clubs,
- Local or statewide Aboriginal and CALD groups/representatives
- Local businesses representatives - major local and regional employers, shopping centre coordinators
- Consumer representatives
- Relevant state government departments/services – DHHS, Child and Family Centres, Housing Tasmania, Departments of Education and State Growth
- Peak community sector organisations - TasCOSS, COTA, YNOT, MRC
- Local government – council staff and councillors

Meeting attendees and respondents agreed that in order to effectively address the needs of transport-disadvantaged residents in any particular area (whether a region or the state as a whole), a project would need to conduct an audit of current services; engage in a gap analysis and assess unmet need; identify barriers to accessing services; and explore possible local solutions.

➤ **Types of information needed to address needs of transport-disadvantaged**

*Audit of current services*

- Scan of current services provided, including routes, frequency of service, capacity, target group, flexibility, fares/fees frequency of service
- Analysis of travel patterns of existing users - origin, destination

*Exploration of unmet need/gap analysis*

- Demographic makeup of community Emergency needs
- Mapping key destinations and times of demand against what is available
- Nature and scope of real (not perceived) demand - who needs transport, how many, what are their problems, what do they require
- Would availability of more options lead to changed transport needs?
- Are there options for mobile services, rather than increased transport?

*Identification of barriers to accessing services*

- Accessories e.g. wheelchairs, walkers etc.
- Need for multiple stops
- Cost
- How long it takes
- Frequency of service
- Conditions of roads- infrastructure to support different modes of transport

*Exploration of possible local solutions*

- Dedicated vehicles
- Sharing transport programs - initiative between organisations
- Different routes for different weather
- Route for the day
- Sharing information about transport options - website apps local point phone, radio announcements, networks

Meeting attendees and respondents agreed that in order to bring transport operators and key stakeholders together to coordinate services, it might be necessary to start with bilateral discussions before moving on to group discussions and to articulate to providers how cooperation can benefit them.



➤ **Ways to bring transport operators together to coordinate services**

- Engage available operators – this could initially be bilateral meetings, possibly followed by group discussions
- Articulate how improving the situation for transport-disadvantaged will benefit them – revenue, improved community image, untapped market
- Choose a neutral central venue (e.g. Child and Family Centre), provide food
- Develop a shared sense of purpose for meeting
- Identify how their systems (transport providers or client stakeholders) could facilitate improved coordination
- Ask key destination organisations to discuss their transport plans

Meeting attendees and respondents felt that beyond the question of limited resources, the lack of a whole-of-government approach to transport issues was a major barrier to communities developing transport plans.

➤ **Key barriers to implementing plan**

- Resource availability - public transport, availability of volunteer drivers or suitable vehicles, costs, funding sources etc
- Challenges of whole of government approach across fed state and local bodies and their inclination to embrace the initiative
- Regulatory, legislative requirements – may need to change legislation to promote opportunity
- Lack of information - knowing who to contact
- Contextual issues such as dispersed population
- Willingness of services to cooperate for a coordinated approach- to focus on moving people rather than protecting interests -
- Individual service issues include prescriptive service delivery guidelines, wanting to protect their patch, risks for staff and vehicles
- Challenges around how to facilitate information sharing and coordinating ( individual apps for smart phones may be a solution) and the risk of key person dependency

## Schedule D – Innovations workshop presentations

### Flexible Transport

Professor Corinne Mulley is the founding Chair in Public Transport at the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies at the University of Sydney. Her talk introduced the concept of Flexible Transport; laid out a variety of models of FT services that have been used in Australia and world-wide; and discussed key questions that must be addressed in designing a flexible transport system.

#### **What are Flexible Transport Services?**

Flexible Transport Services are public transport services which cover a broad range of mobility products - usually operated with moderate and/or small capacity vehicles. The following components of the service can be adjusted to meet the actual needs of the user.

- Route
- Vehicle
- Operator
- Passenger
- Payment

#### **What are the types of applications for Flexible Transport?**

The applications that have been used in Australia and the world are diverse and include the following:

- General use services
- Local and feeder services to trunk haul services
- Replacing low-frequency conventional services
- Replacing fixed routes in evening or weekends
- Dedicated/special services, restricted to certain users
- Services in low-density rural areas
- Efficiencies in social mobility resources
- Niche urban markets

#### **How do you design a Flexible Transport System?**

The key decisions in designing a system include the following operational decisions:

- Should the system be semi fixed or completely flexible
- Semi-fixed or completely flexible?
- Corridor or area based?
- Integrated into other modes or standalone?
- Only pick up pre-booked passengers?
- Integrated with other agencies?

## Flexible Transport - Key points for the way forward

The following are points that emerged in Prof. Mulley's presentation and in subsequent comments from participants.

- Transport legislation is generally quite specific. It is important that legislation under a flexible transport model be outcome-focused.
- Community Transport is often 'outside' the transport policy framework. It is essential that community transport be included within the same policy and legislative framework as other services if they are providing the public with passenger transport services.
- Contracts are too rigid and often lack incentives for innovation. Contracts should be written that provide flexible services without artificial constraints such as set timetables and there need to be incentives for innovation.
- Bus services need targeted incentives to motivate operators. There is a need to look for alternative delivery mechanisms that exploit economies of scale.
- Flexible services are more expensive than well-loaded mass transit but are cheaper than empty buses.
- Funding for flexible services requires an additional initial investment since flexible services take time to build patronage.
- Taxi services should consider having multiple hiring fares that come closer to public transport fares. Taxi maxi size vehicles operating as a bus should charge separate, public transport fares.
- Not-for-profit transport operators should charge public transport fares when they are a part of the public transport mix.
- Fares on vehicles need to reflect service charge premiums if they deviate from the main route. Smart ticketing can provide such a flexible fare system.
- There are generally plenty of vehicles in the community but the mix favours conventional services. Vehicle type is often determined by peak demand and government funding. There needs to be an overall framework to ensure funding achieves the appropriate fleet mix to satisfy real needs.
- Sharing spare capacity in all sectors, including bus, taxis and not-for-profit organisations, is possible by writing brokerage into contracts. Also encouraging greater transferability of drivers across modes of travel can address shortages in volunteer and other drivers.
- All sectors of transport need to work together to deliver the best services to the public. Trust between sectors can be enhanced through building on peak body

relationships and regional co-coordinator activities. It is also important to build skills of partnership governance between multiple stakeholders.

- Enhancing community expectations and awareness requires resources to educate the public about the benefits of sharing flexible transport resources. This would include compiling data on the new types of opportunities offered.
- Operators tend to be comfortable with their core business, so it is important to provide evidence on the effectiveness and profitability of flexible services to operators and also demonstrate how flexible services can contribute to their core business.

### Creating a centralised transport website

Jen Newman, the southern representative of Regional Development Australia, Tasmania, and Patrick Bruce, Digital Marketing Advisor – Passenger Transport Victoria (PTV), spoke about creating a centralised passenger information website for Tasmania that shows the full range of commercial, public, not-for-profit and active transport options, including routes, fares, timetables.

As noted above, creation of such a website was one of the top priorities for almost all participants in this project. All other Australian states have websites which provide basic transport information for residents and tourists; Tasmania is the only state to lack such a website.

One of the best transport web sites in terms of ease of use, offering different modes of transportation and providing comprehensive journey planner across the State was the Public Transport Victoria web site (see <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/>).

Patrick Bruce, PTV's digital marketing advisor, noted that use of the website is growing dramatically (as many visits in the first four months of 2014 as in the whole of 2009); that journey planner usage has increased tenfold over the last seven years; that between January and March 2014, 96% of all customer contacts were through the website; and that the PTV web site gets 75% of all public transport website visits in Victoria. He reported that the main reasons that website visitors visit the website are to access the journey planner (40%) or online timetables (33%). He also noted that mobile phones now make up the majority (47%) of visits to the website, and that a good phone interface is crucial.

### **Website - Key points for the way forward**

The following are some of the suggested next steps developed at the workshop.

- The website name and address should indicate the site's purpose and vision. Suggestions included "Go Tasmania" and "GoTasGo."
- A government agency or statutory authority should have the overarching responsibility for creating and maintaining the web site and negotiating the contracts with all transport operators.

- A staged approach to the website, such as use of a Google Transit journey planner, may be a way of at least getting basic information on the website right away. Eventually the website should include all transport modes: for-profit, not-for-profit, active, and ride- and car-sharing. Please see Recommendation 1 below for further thoughts on functionality.
- It is important that the web site gather the appropriate data to measure the degree of success of the web site and to identify areas for improvement. See Recommendation 1 below for a full list of the analytics that should be included.

## Wheels for Work and Training

John Pauley, a project manager with Phoenix Coaches, spoke about an innovative project initiated by Phoenix Coaches/Merseylink and supported by the Tasmanian Government's Wheels for Work and Training fund. The key partners in the project are Metro and the Cradle Coast Authority.

The project addresses four distinct travel markets:

- Travel between Burnie and Devonport.
- Accessing Latrobe and Port Sorell.
- Getting to the coast from the hinterland south of the Bass Highway.
- Going west from Burnie.

The project aims to deliver innovative change in four key areas:

- Better route structures.
- Better timetables.
- Innovative fare products.
- Integration between service providers.

### **Wheels for Work and Training – Key points for the way forward**

The project will address:

- Passenger transport and accessibility.
- Centrally locating bus stops within major cities and towns.
- Providing more flexible and responsive use of passenger transport to cater for the access needs of rural and remote communities, including better use of community transport services.
- Encouraging the take-up of an additional WAT license in Devonport and investigating the feasibility of introducing further WAT vehicles into the region.
- Utilising the goals from the 2006 Cradle Coast Integrated Transport Strategy Implementation Plans.
- Innovative ways of overcoming the "last mile" problem.

- Getting all the resources currently available in the community working together. These include:
  - Urban bus services.
  - General access bus services between the towns.
  - School buses in rural areas and within towns.
  - Community Transport Service Tasmania (CTST) vehicles.
  - Community vehicles allied with community houses and allied services
  - Vehicles used by a range of other community service organisations.

The key challenge is competing with a 35 to 45 minute car journey between Burnie and Devonport that takes 105 to 115 minutes by bus. It's not the bus that is slow –the quickest trips on the current timetable provide a journey time of under an hour. It's the route that provides the challenge. Cost also weighs against bus transport for those who are ineligible for a concession.