

## **COMMUNITY TRANSPORT POLICY STATEMENT**

City of Greater Dandenong Council is committed to supporting residents to maintain their independence and connection with their community. Council provides a community transport service to eligible older residents, people with disabilities and other transport disadvantaged residents to assist in meeting this commitment.

## **PURPOSE**

This policy guides Council in determining access and eligibility to the Community Transport service.

## **SCOPE**

This policy is applicable to all staff involved in delivering Community Transport Services.

## **DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

Council supports the definition of community transport that the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) has developed that the MAV have also endorsed.

It is defined as;

- not-for-profit
- flexible
- able to adapt to the level of service required by passengers on the day of travel
- passenger focused

In addition, community transport is defined as transport that is designed primarily to support vulnerable and transport disadvantaged members of the community to access services and participate in community life.

Community transport can also assist people who do not have access to private vehicles access employment in areas poorly served by public transport thereby reducing unemployment and their social and economic disadvantage in a sustainable way.

**Community transport passengers** typically:

- Do not or cannot drive
- Cannot access public transport
- Require assistance with mobility, communication or other forms of personal support
- Need a coordinated service and consistency of drivers
- Experience financial difficulties and/or
- Lack family or social network support<sup>1</sup>

## **OBJECTIVES OF POLICY**

- Council provides a Community Transport Service to offer an affordable and accessible service for those in the Greater Dandenong community who may not otherwise be able to participate in community life.
- Priority access to Council's Community Transport Services is for clients in receipt of Council aged and disability services, community members who experience restrictions to mobility, are frail or otherwise transport disadvantaged.
- The service is delivered in a way that complements transport services provided by other stakeholders and agencies with the aim of improving the overall transport system in Greater Dandenong.

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<sup>1</sup> VCOSS Community Transport Snapshot Project July 2008

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Council's Community Transport Service aims to provide services to those residents who are unable to use public or private transport as a result of one or more of the following factors:

- Physical or general health limitations (eg disability, frail age)
- Limited finances
- Lack family or social network support
- Socially or geographically isolated
- A lack of alternative mobility options

The service provides transport to Council Community Care programs and various venues and events, generally within the municipality.

A subsidised fee is requested from all passengers using the service. The fee is reviewed and adjusted annually. The fees are discussed and agreed with clients before using the service. Fees aim to ensure those that can contribute do so, whilst protecting those who are financially vulnerable.

## PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE<sup>2</sup>

The Community Transport program operates under the following Principles of Practice:

- **Community participation** or community driven – by appropriate people living and working in the community.
- **Self-determination or empowerment** – when and where possible enabling people to have some control and be involved in assessing the problems and the decision-making processes that ultimately affect them.
- **Needs-based planning** – mapping what already exists, comparing with other communities, collecting data, observing trends and, most importantly, listening to the people who know and experience the problem.
- **Access** – ensuring transport is affordable, appropriate, available, safe and comfortable.
- **Equity** – recognising and providing for those groups who are most transport disadvantaged.
- **Collaboration** – with other providers and sectors to coordinate effort, share resources, information, problem solving and action planning.
- Appropriate use of **technology and resources** – making better use of resources that already exist and where needed having technology that services and communities can afford.
- **Sustainability/community capacity** – having responses and solutions that will last over time and build up the capacity of the community to support the solutions.
- **Integration** – bringing it all together to form a comprehensive response that links in with other community or transport-related plans, infrastructure and activities.
- **Action learning** – responding to problems with a learning cycle of action. This involves integrating theory and practice, utilising reflective tools, having a mentor and a network of people to safely bounce ideas, challenge and be challenged
- In addition, the principle of **Advocacy** by Council to Government and transport providers to ensure Greater Dandenong residents have their share of available transport resources.

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<sup>2</sup> Community Based Transport Queensland Toolbox 2006