

Community Transport: How Are We Travelling?

Conference 23-24 May, 2011

The Journey Ahead: developing a shared understanding of community transport.

Workshop Outputs Report



Report prepared by **People and Place Consulting** for the Victorian Community Transport Association and the Department of Transport



The Victorian Community Transport
Association Incorporated



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Background

The Victorian Community Transport Association (VCTA) is the peak body representing community transport providers in Victoria. It leads advocacy for improved community transport across the State in accordance with its vision of community transport as an essential component of an integrated transport system.

On Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 May 2011 the VCTA held a conference for community transport providers and associated local and state government agencies to discuss issues in community transport and explore future directions. The conference took place in Bendigo.

As the state government agency responsible for transport policy, the Department of Transport (DOT) is currently building an evidence base on community transport and is seeking to engage more strongly with a range of stakeholders.

The Department and VCTA collaborated in the conduct of a workshop at the VCTA conference to explore ways of supporting and improving community transport. Greg Stephens of People and Place Consulting was engaged to design and facilitate the workshop at the conference.

This Report presents the range of ideas and comments made by workshop participants.

Workshop Objectives

The VCTA and DOT promoted the workshop as follows:

The Department of Transport (DOT) and the Victorian Community Transport Association (VCTA) are keen to work together with government agencies, service providers and local communities to explore ways of supporting and improving community transport. This workshop is an opportunity to help us gain a ‘grass roots’ insight into what people value most about community transport, what’s been working well and how we can sustain and improve service provision in years to come.

Don’t miss the opportunity to help shape the future for community transport!

The specific objectives for the session were to identify:

- aspects of community transport that have been working well – the successes
- the fundamental things about community transport that we need to build on
- whether and how DOT’s ideas can be usefully applied and what else might be considered
- ideas for sustaining and improving service provision in the short and medium term
- ways in which the VCTA can support people

A detailed outline of the workshop process is provided at Appendix A.

Workshop Outputs – Key Themes

The following are some of the key and priority themes that emerged from the discussions. A more extensive list of workshop outputs is provided at Appendix B.

Part 1: Celebrating Success

What are some of the success stories for community transport?

Draw one thing that you think has been working well in community transport. Provide a brief caption explaining what it is and why you think it's a success.

Door-to-door service

Community transport offers a complete service, taking people from their homes directly to the services they require and then back to their own homes.

Contact and connections

Community transport helps to connect otherwise isolated people with other people and services.

Community spirit - volunteers

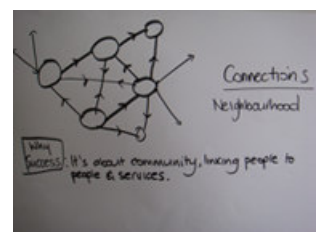
Community transport builds community, not just through connections with other clients and service providers, but importantly also because of the invaluable volunteer workforce that makes it all happen.

Local and customer focussed

Community transport is about locally-based services that, because they are local, know about and understand people's individual needs and can respond to them.

Safe, reliable and flexible

Community transport offers a safe, reliable and flexible means of getting people where they need to go.



Part 2: Building On Success

In this part of the workshop participants were asked to contribute to three conversations that explored how best to build on the successful elements of community transport.

Conversation 1

What are the fundamental things about community transport that are important to build on?

The following outputs from table discussions received the most support from the group as a whole.

Affordable and flexible service that fills critical needs (eg fills a gap)
Cooperation between organisations to prevent duplication of services in community transport and sharing resources
Appropriate funding to address inequities across Victoria. Need to cover capital costs and varying costs related to regional and metropolitan areas
Funding – Federal, State, Local
More support and recognition for volunteer training and development <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Volunteer card
Continuous ... Needs identification and monitoring
Sustainability ... <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ includes – Vehicle Replacement Programand – continuous volunteer recruitment and training
Partnerships/Share resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Best practice▪ Benchmarking▪ Models to share

Affordable & Flexible service that fills critical needs (eg. fills d gap).

1/ Co-operation between organisation to prevent duplication of services in community transport & sharing resources

3/ Appropriate fundings to address inequities across Victoria. Need to cover capital costs and varying costs related to regional & metropolitan areas

FUNDING//
\$ \$ \$ \$ \$
FED", STATE, LOCAL

RECOGNITION.
MORE SUPPORT FOR
VOLUNTEER TRAINING
AND DEVELOPMENT.
VOLUNTEER CARD

① CONTINUOUS.....
Needs identification
& monitoring

② SUSTAINABILITY.....
includes → Vehicle Replacement Program
and → Continuous volunteer recruitment & training

Partnerships/Share Resources
- Best Practice
• Bench Marking
• Models to share

Conversation 2

Consider these ideas:

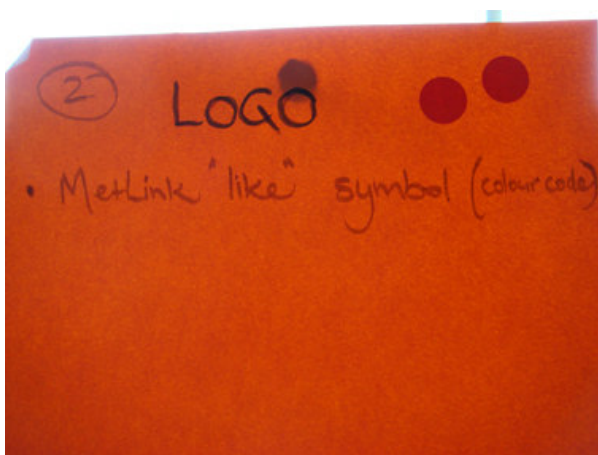
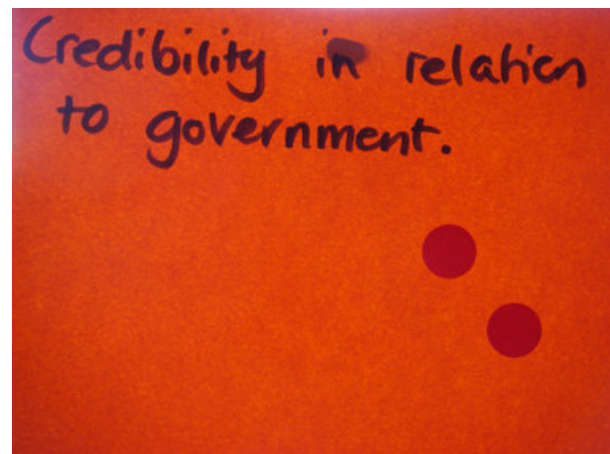
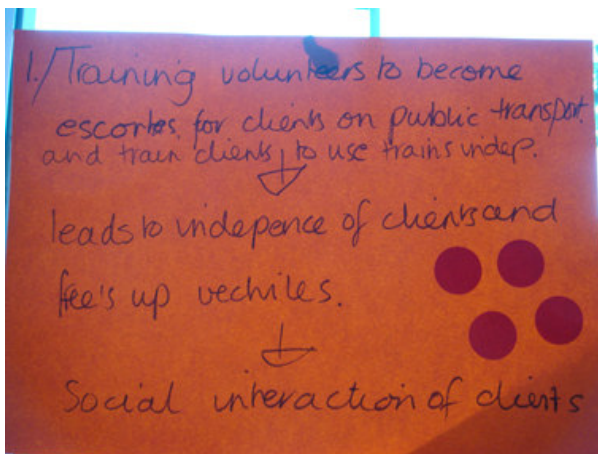
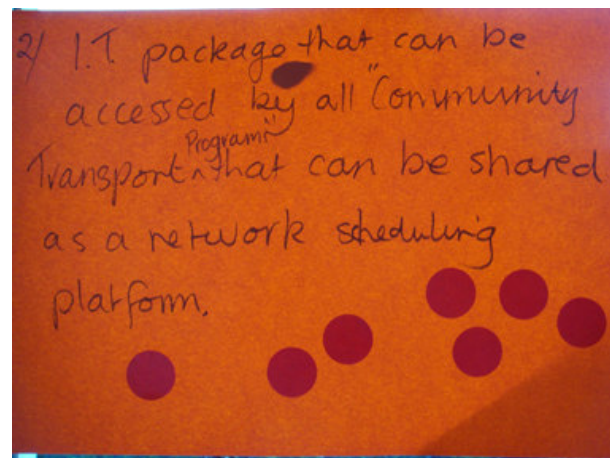
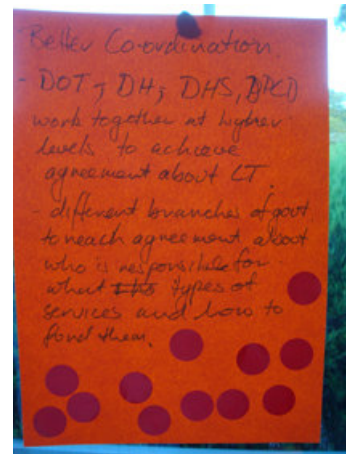
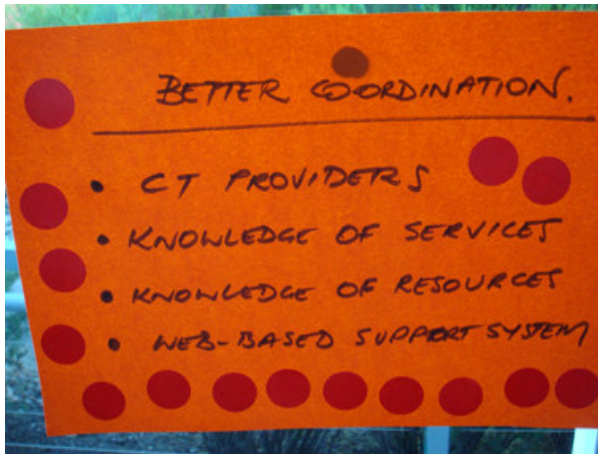
- Better coordination (of existing resources)
- More sustainable service models
- Integration with mainstream transport system

How do these ideas help us to build on the 'fundamentals of community transport'?

If they don't, what would? How?

The following outputs from table discussions received the most support from the group as a whole.

<p>'Better coordination'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community transport providers ▪ Knowledge of services ▪ Knowledge of resources ▪ Web-based support system
<p>'Better coordination'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Department of Transport (DOT), Department of Health (DH), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) work together at higher levels to achieve agreement about community transport ▪ different branches of government to reach agreement about who is responsible for what types of services and how to fund them
Planning and service delivery model at the local level
(2) IT package that can be accessed by all "Community Transport Programs" that can be shared as a network scheduling platform
(1) Training volunteers to become escorts for clients on public transport and train clients to use trains independently → leads to independence of clients and frees up vehicles → social interaction of clients
Credibility in relation to government
Logo – Metlink "like" symbol (colour code)



Conversation 3

How can we sustain and improve service provision?

- two realistic and practical quick wins
- one realistic and practical medium-term solution

The following outputs from table discussions received the most support from the group as a whole.

Quick Wins

DVD package
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Driver training▪ Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)▪ Aligned with the Act for compliance of community transport organisations
Fund additional capacity for non-Home and Community Care (HACC) passengers to be carried by HACC-funded services
Establish regional/local CT service provider networks
Interactive website/forum space incorporating case studies, blogs, resources, stories etc
Get the lovely, nice, well meaning but busy bureaucrats in a room and get them talking about CT (lock them up if necessary), including resources for the VCTA to be an effective peak body

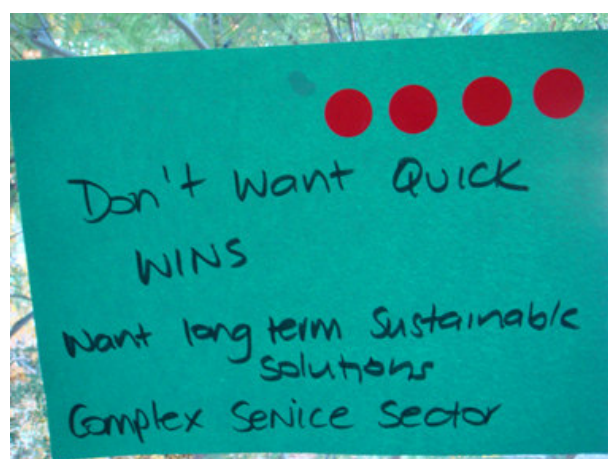
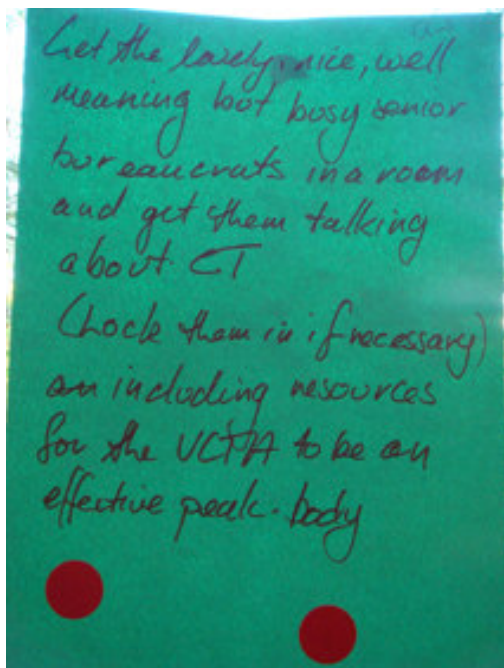
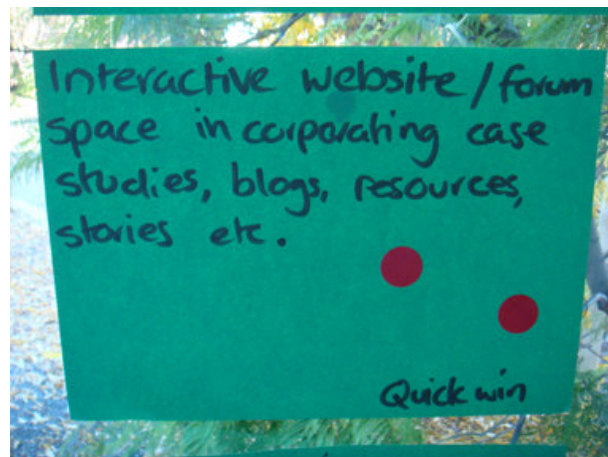
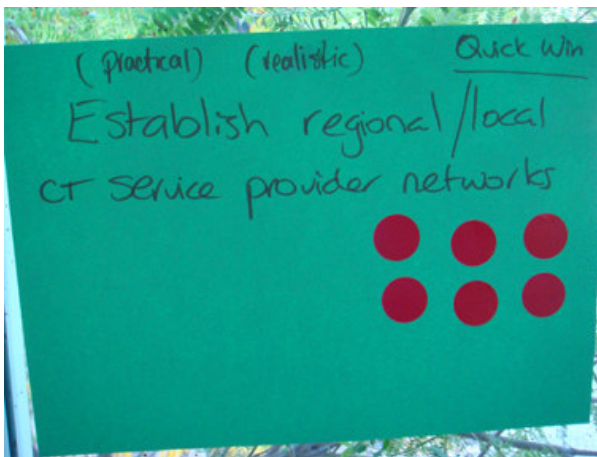
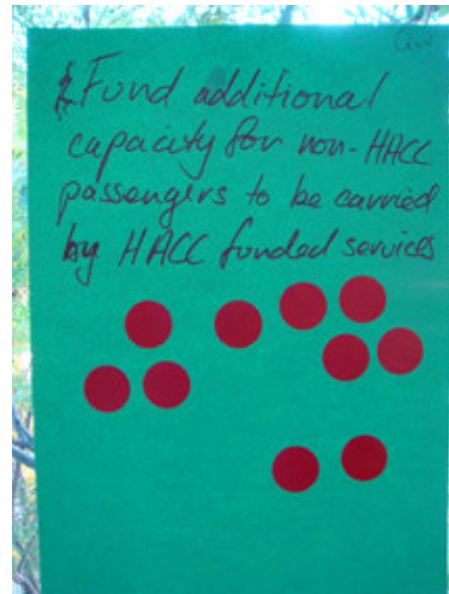
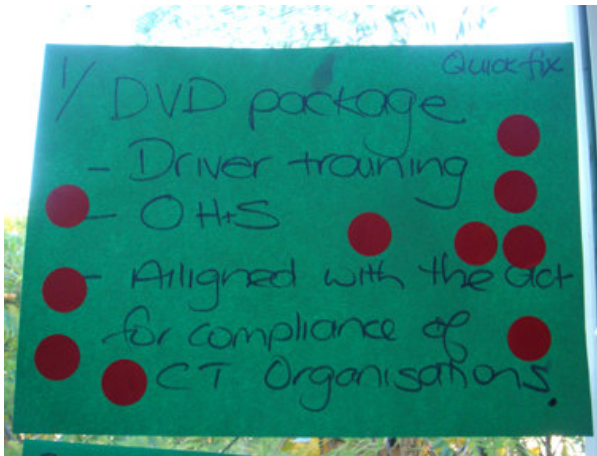
The 'counter' view - there was support against the idea of 'quick wins' in favour of medium-term solutions:

Don't want quick wins – Want long-term sustainable solutions – Complex service sector

Medium-term solutions

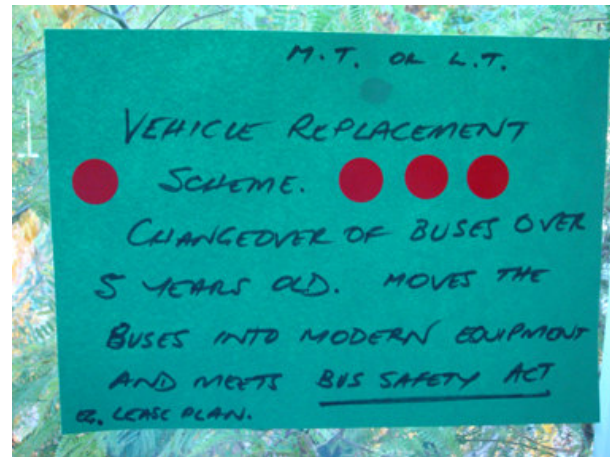
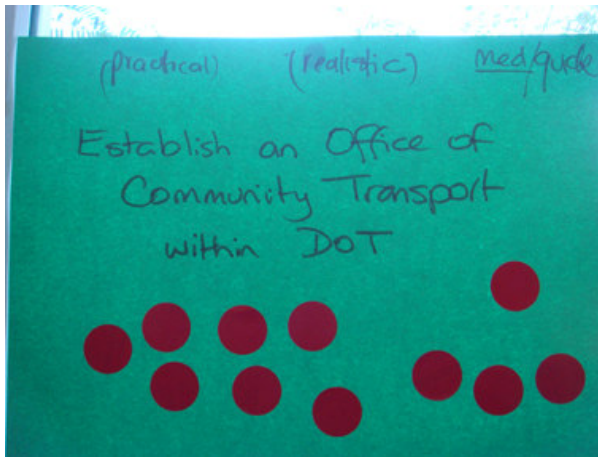
Establish an Office of Community Transport within DOT
Vehicle replacement scheme – Change over of buses over 5 years old. Moves the buses into modern equipment and meets Bus Safety Act eg Lease Plan

The Journey Ahead: developing a shared understanding of community transport



The 'counter' view

Medium-term solutions



Part 3: VCTA Support

This part of the workshop asked participants to consider how the VCTA could provide support to service providers and users of community transport.

What does VCTA need to do to support providers/people? Document the three most useful things.

1. Advocacy and Leadership Role

- providing a vision for community transport
- lobbying for community transport
- providing input for the sector to policy matters and community transport issues
- marketing

2. Information and Education Hub

- more informative and active website
- information on best practice
- information for providers
- regular forums
- resource and information sharing
- training and professional development

3. Undertake a 'membership drive'

- increase representation
- additional resources
- greater support for members
- more legitimacy with providers and government

Funding for VCTA to enable it to take a stronger role was also raised by a number of tables, including resources to enable ongoing staffing within the organisation.

Appendix A: Workshop Process

The workshop was held after lunch on the second day of the conference. It ran for an hour and 45 minutes. About 40 people participated in the workshop. Participants were seated around tables in 'cabaret style' where they discussed the questions, shared ideas and identified key/priority responses or actions going forward.

The workshop was conducted in three parts:

Part 1: Celebrating Success

What are some of the success stories for community transport?

Participants were asked to respond to the question:

What is one thing that you feel has really been working well in community transport?

In responding, participants were asked individually to represent their ideas as a drawing, labelled with a brief caption explaining what it is and why it is a success. Participants then shared their drawing with others at the same table.

The facilitator then asked participants in the whole group to share a sample of responses.

Part 2: Building On Success

This part of the workshop was run as a suite of three conversations, with each conversation building on the previous. Conversations were held with participants seated at tables.

First conversation - What are the fundamental things about community transport that are important to build on?

Participants were asked to identify the three most important things.

Each idea was listed separately on coloured cards – yellow – which were then collected and stuck on the walls for later review.

Second conversation - Consider these ideas:

- *Better coordination (of existing resources)*
- *More sustainable service models*
- *Integration with mainstream transport system*

*How do these ideas help us to build on the 'fundamentals' of community transport?
If they don't, what would? How?*

Participants were asked to identify three ways the ideas (or something else) could be applied. Again, each idea was listed separately on coloured cards – orange – which were then collected and stuck on the walls for later review.

Third conversation - How can we can sustain and improve service provision?

Participants were asked to identify:

- two realistic and practical quick wins
- one realistic and practical medium term solution

Again, each idea was listed separately on coloured cards – green – which were then collected and stuck on the walls for later review.

Review

Participants were each provided with three 'voting dots' and asked to walk around and review the actions and contributions using the dots to identify the three ideas that resonated most with them going forward.

This created a sense of the ideas that are most important across the group as a whole.

The facilitator reviewed the most noted ideas with the group, seeking comment or observations from the group through the process.

Part 3: VCTA Support

Participants were asked to respond to the question:

What does VCTA need to do to support people/providers? Document the three most useful things.

Participants discussed the question in groups at their tables. They were then asked as a group to identify the three most useful things for VCTA to do. Ideas were documented for each table and subsequently collected.

The facilitator then asked participants in the whole group to share a sample of key responses.

Close

The session was then closed by the DOT and VCTA representatives, who thanked participants for their contribution.



Appendix B: Workshop Outputs – the ‘Raw Data’

The following captures ALL responses generated during the workshop. Where appropriate, responses have been grouped by tables. This may be useful to gain a sense of context for the ideas presented.

There was some other material collected which documents the broader conversations (before prioritisation) and this material has also been included.

Part 1: Celebrating Success

What are some of the success stories for community transport?

Draw one thing that you think has been working well in community transport. Provide a brief caption explaining what it is and why you think it's a success.

Captions included the following:

- From home to many (social) connection points
- Clients driven by car and volunteer to attend medical appointments – door-to-door from home to specialist
- Door-to-door service – medical, social, shopping
- Moving people around – home, recreation, schools etc
- Volunteer and client contact – door to door
- Creating community connections – person to person
- HACC Medical transport – home to doctor, hospital etc
- People contact – affordable, getting connected, making friends
- Locally based services – understanding local community needs
- About the person – connecting people – those in it believe in it
- Help moving people
- Customer care – attention to user requirements
- Community spirit – volunteer-driven community spirit adding value to, and enriching, the lives of older people, people with a disability and others who are disadvantaged (as well as enriching their own lives)
- Better connections – “hand in hand”
- Connections – neighbourhood. Why success? It's about community, linking people to people and services
- People, vehicles – number of available assets in community. Success because they are in the community and ready to use.
- People getting places, socialising - local solutions to meet people's needs
- Transporting to medical appointments in other cities – reliable
- Coordinated service – people know who they are calling to book/cancel bus service
- Connection to community – because it gives individual who may be socially isolated the opportunity to connect with the community – shopping, socialising, etc
- Customer satisfaction from reliable service – community service – routed-timetabled service provides accessible, safe service not offered by public transport; paid drivers, not volunteers
- [Shopping bus] The getting together with others – the social outing

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- Strong community ownership
- Identified shared commitment. Why: Benefit and weight of numbers / directions
- “Adaptable” – meets individual needs
- Communication between volunteers and clients. Successful because it builds a good relationship and trust
- Customer focussed/centred. Why?: Flexible and fits individual needs. Damn close to ASM
- Flexible service delivery. Why? Flexibility allows for clients to access more than one service (i.e. hospital & supermarket) – flexible with times, days
- Meets need not serviced by government – community ownership
- Meets individual needs – individuals are different and have differing needs
- Door-to-door transport alleviating rural isolation
- Flexible / multi-trip – Flexible – client and destinations
- Volunteer resources – very good at recruiting community resources – flexibility, door-to-door, social connectivity, affordability, community ownership
- Flexibility – personal assistance. Why? Because it meets people’s individual needs. Attracts volunteers, particularly men
- Door-to-door – home to town service centre. Why? Personalised service, assists rural/remote residents who have no access to public transport, flexible service, assists people with mobility issues, looks after our ageing population, meets individual needs, attracts volunteers (men), affordable, social inclusion
- Interaction with clients and volunteers through being able to socially interact
- Friendship – connection, Social interaction, Flexibility, Door-to-door (lack of money – can’t provide what we need – need money not infrastructure)
- Caring and supportive
- Keeping people connected – social inclusion
- Volunteers – Successful as it reflects a philosophy of ‘giving back’. Also excellent training provides skill development for drivers. Volunteers provide social interaction and support to clients but this is reciprocated – clients to volunteers
- Volunteer – client relationships
- Transporting clients from regional areas to city appointments
- Volunteer coordinators – they understand the need for social inclusion
- CT remembers that we work for the client
- Getting people to shops/services
- Able to get to medical appointments – therefore health is improved
- Clients making friends/connections
- Giving people a hand when needed

Part 2: Building On Success

Conversation 1

What are the fundamental things about community transport that are important to build on?

Continuous ... Needs identification and monitoring
Sustainability ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes – Vehicle Replacement Program and – continuous volunteer recruitment and training
Coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicles organisation people
Consumer centre and focused, including health benefits, job skills, succession planning and building, support social networks and supporting local business
All inclusion model that benefits all levels of involvement (eg volunteers, paid staff and consumers)
Affordable and flexible service that fills critical needs (eg fills a gap)
Cooperation between organisations to prevent duplication of services and encourage sharing resources
Ongoing relevant data collection – state wide – to reflect community usage and needs
Appropriate funding to address inequities across Victoria. Need to cover capital costs and varying costs related to regional and metropolitan areas
More support and recognition for volunteer training and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer card
Funding – Federal, State, Local
Recognition by government that Community Transport is a valuable asset and needed
Incorporating new technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-transport solutions, diverse models eg virtual patient/medical services
Funding
Common and clear role of Community Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical and CT
Community development/engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteers, participation, independence, effectiveness
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> independence, safety
Responsive to community needs
System of retaining knowledge and policies
Consistency of reporting and data collection
Flexibility of service provision (responsive to needs)
Workforce development and resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administering services Delivering Services
Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stability Clarity Restraints
Partnerships/Share resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice Benchmarking Models to share

Other issues that were raised during Conversation 1: What are the fundamental things about community transport that are important to build on?

- Workforce development
 - improve skill levels of workers and volunteers
 - Limited cohesion between group
 - district/regional coordination
 - sharing resources
 - Identify and adopt 'best practice', including:
 - better use of resources
 - more sharing of resources
 - more effective partnerships
 - Develop benchmarks for the areas that work well
 - Address financial issues impacting on community transport, including:
 - costs
 - financial stability
 - funding sources
 - Relationship between HACC and Non HACC funding
 - Lack of 'one stop shop' for funding
 - Funding restraints
 - Community transport responds to a range of factors, including:
 - client needs
 - client assessments
 - administration of services
 - varying client eligibility
-
- Collecting and reporting data
 - Policy development
 - Attracting and maintaining volunteers
 - Greater flexibility
 - Recognise and encourage existing coordination between service providers
 - Recognise existing services and goodwill
 - Acknowledge sustainable services can be built on existing knowledge
 - Develop systems for retaining knowledge and policies
-
- Focused on the needs of consumers
 - Providing support for volunteers
 - Affordable and flexible
 - Support the great people who work in organisations
 - Creates inclusion for volunteers, staff and clients
 - Valued – including paid and non-paid staff
 - Fills a critical need where there is no critical mass to attract PT services
 - High level of community ownership
 - Attracting community champions
 - Helps participants to build job skills
 - Special interaction between service providers (including drivers) and passengers
 - Generates health benefits
 - Underpins social support networks
 - Supports other business

Conversation 2

Consider these ideas:

- Better coordination (of existing resources)
- More sustainable service models
- Integration with mainstream transport system

How do these ideas help us to build on the 'fundamentals of community transport'?

If they don't, what would? How?

Develop better working relationships with DOT, including public transport taxis and other services
Credibility in relation to government
Capture social return on investment
Vehicle replacement program - similar to school bus replacement
Logo – Metlink “like” symbol (colour code)
Coordinated “Information” provision
‘Better coordination’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CT providers ▪ Knowledge of services ▪ Knowledge of resources ▪ Web-based support system
‘More sustainable service models’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trial projects ▪ Evaluate usage (over a period of time) ▪ Develop model
‘Integration with mainstream transport’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good idea, but not able to integrate easily
Optimising resource usage
Planning and service delivery model at the local level
Agreed minimum service level
Regional coordination across LGAs
Different funding model - \$ = integrated, regional + broader service
‘Better coordination’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOT, DH, DHS, DPCD work together at higher levels to achieve agreement about community transport ▪ different branches of government to reach agreement about who is responsible for what types of services and how to fund them
‘Integration with mainstream transport’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ structured funding of travel training as part of CT programs
‘More sustainable service models’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOT to fund a core CT program that works in conjunction with HACC funded CT (shared occupation of vehicles) ▪ Succession planning – most services don’t have capacity to employ more than one staff member
(1) Training volunteers to become escorts for clients on public transport and train clients to use trains independently → leads to independence of clients and frees up vehicles → social interaction of clients
(2) IT package that can be accessed by all “Community Transport Programs” that can be shared as a network scheduling platform
Broader funding
Greater discussion
Community education – ‘Accessibility’

Other issues that were raised during Conversation 2: How do these ideas help us to build on the 'fundamentals of community transport'?

- Would like to understand DOT's thoughts on 'better coordination'
 - How to maintain 'door-to-door' service:
 - number of programs
 - availability of buses
 - bus sharing in down time
 - resource sharing
 - Facilitate coordination across a number of groups/councils/areas
 - How to better cross boundaries
 - Address gaps in service delivery
 - How to achieve better integration with the mainstream, eg. getting to station, accessibility, gap filling
 - Make CT more sustainable
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- Encourage 'social enterprise' models
- Build credibility in relation to government
- Develop more sustainable service models
- Capture 'social return on investment' in evaluation of CT services
- Establish partnerships – don't cut across existing services
- Improve dialogue with DOT, Public Transport, Taxi Services
- Developing understanding of a range of different models

Conversation 3

How can we can sustain and improve service provision?

- two realistic and practical quick wins
- one realistic and practical medium-term solution

Interactive website/forum space incorporating case studies, blogs, resources, stories etc	Quick
Lobby and increase the profile of community transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ local, state and federal 	Quick
Planning and Connectivity	Quick
Strengthen referral and information communication CT (Speed dating) = “marries” up the services	Quick
State-wide Community Transport Directory	Medium
Allow CT to operate a route service where there is a specific need	Quick
Volunteer Card (based on Carers Card) which would encourage people to become volunteers and be supported in some tangible way	Quick
Vehicle replacement scheme – Change over of buses over 5 years old. Moves the buses into modern equipment and meets Bus Safety Act eg Lease Plan	Medium or Long
Don't want quick wins – Want long-term sustainable solutions – Complex service sector	
Ongoing funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Security ▪ Ability to plan ahead and respond to service needs ▪ “Cross-border funding” – regional partnerships including <u>all</u> providers 	Medium long term
DVD package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Driver training ▪ OH&S ▪ Aligned with the Act for compliance of CT organisations 	Quick
Promotion of Community Transport on TV networks to raise our profile as a viable transport option	Quick
Development of IT support state-wide	Medium
Fund additional capacity for non-HACC passengers to be carried by HACC-funded services	Quick
Get the lovely, nice, well meaning but busy bureaucrats in a room and get them talking about CT (lock them up if necessary), including resources for the VCTA to be an effective peak body	Quick
(1) To fund new services where there are currently gaps in service provision (2) Establish project funding for innovative transport projects	Medium
Sharing best practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ on-line forum ▪ blog ▪ chat rooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ moderated ○ set topics 	Quick
Sector-wide political message for budget bid	Medium
Establish regional/local CT service provider networks	Quick
Update the VCTA CT Operational Guidelines Manual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ include Bus Safety Act 	Quick

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Establish an Office of Community Transport within DOT	Medium
Carpooling project to broaden the concept of CT as specifically for disadvantaged people eg mainstreaming	Quick
Getting all our community-owned buses compliant with the new Act eg tour buses, seniors, Lions, hotels, golf clubs	Quick
Knowing our local communities and neighbouring communities Who provides what in terms of CT Communication links - networks	Medium
Lobby for budget line item – State and Federal	Medium

Other issues that were raised during Conversation 3: How can we can sustain and improve service provision?

- Building relationships between stakeholders
- Telling the stories
- Creating an interactive website/forum space
- Developing good practice case studies
- Encouraging opportunities to share with other providers
- Address funding issues
- Developing 'outreach models' to improve access for service delivery of other services
- Informing community of services that are available
- Acknowledging the diverse issues that affect people's access to services, including availability of transport, health status and social networks
- Establishing a budget line item for transport within HACC funding

-
- Improve understanding of who's supplying what!!
 - Draw on local knowledge
 - Avoid duplication → better coordination across areas and boundaries
 - Break down closed boundaries??
 - Why a quick win? Sustainability is more important
 - Encourage ongoing funding and service that is sustainable
 - Encourage bigger entities to support (not replace) smaller resources
 - Develop enhanced communication links
 - Open up the boundaries
 - Address the problem that crossing boundaries is often prevented by funding sources

Part 3: VCTA Support

What does VCTA need to do to support providers/people? Document the three most useful things.

Advocacy and Leadership Role – call for input by the sector on industry/sector issues so Victoria can present a consolidated response to sector/policy changes. VCTA needs more funding to provide ‘peak body’ level of support to the sector. The advocacy VCTA does on behalf of the sector is ‘huge’ for the providers. This needs to be recognised.

Channelling information

- Website – alerts
- Other ways – newsletter, email

VCTA membership drive – so it can raise membership and income and have resources → which will support people/providers.

-
1. VCTA to support new local/regional CT networks
 2. Bulk vehicle purchasing and insurance – best practice
 3. Training and professional development – disseminating information on best practice
 4. Advocacy/policy advice/lobby politicians
 5. Obtain core grant to operate VCTA i.e. staff, research as a peak body
-

Best practice hotline – Information for providers

Marketing – Raise the profile of CT

Training and Consultation – Advocate/lobby to government

Heaps of funding to enable professional support to CT providers

Regular forums to enable people to be kept up to date with governance direction, latest information, funding etc

More up-to-date, active website with activities, information etc

Leadership role in lobbying for community transport, eg. find out what the sector wants

Leadership role in ‘vision’ for community transport

Needs a voice at both state and federal level

Pull information together

- website
- workshop topical issues – facilitate and deliver

Champion for industry

Seek funding to better support the VCTA – eg create executive role and office (funded positions)

Central point/body for industry eg sharing of resources, case studies etc

Continue to be represented on federal body ACTA

Support best practice/standard development

Support professional development

Develop and maintain tools for training providers and volunteers in safety and OH&S matters (DVD)

Continue to advocate for more funding and resources

A paid officer within the organisation to facilitate the work of VCTA