



Public & Community Transport

Public Transport

Public transport is a fundamentally important community resource with a variable distribution throughout Victoria. Some areas enjoy train, tram and bus services, while there are rural areas almost totally unserved.

Public transport is the best answer to moving large numbers of people in an environmentally sound manner. In addition, public transport is the only means of independent motorised travel for approximately one third of the population, comprising pre-drivers, post-drivers and non-drivers.

Historically in Victoria the planning and delivery function for public transport has been done centrally and local governments have not been greatly involved. However, local governments contend with many issues that result from public transport shortage: excessive car use, congestion, parking pressure, accidents, pollution and social problems of isolation, ill-health and obesity.

While local governments are not service providers, paradoxically they can perhaps do most for public transport by their actions in other disciplines, particularly land use and parking.

Local governments will be acting in the best interest of their community by developing an active engagement in public transport issues. Following are links to information regarding role, resources and examples to support local governments' involvement in public transport planning and provision.

Community Transport

Groups with limited mobility can look to local governments to provide some means of transport.

Local governments often find that community members are unable to get to local services

and activities due to transport unavailability. In addition, community planning work can highlight lack of transport as a major community issue.

To alleviate isolation and facilitate access, many local governments either provide a community bus service or coordinate with a local provider. These services are funded to some extent by the Federal Health and Community Care (HACC) allowance which is available for frail, elderly, those with disabilities and their carers. A portion of this funding can be allocated for transport to essential services, which usually takes the form of community transport as either a bus or system of volunteer drivers. Local governments often either act as providers or support other providers to undertake this service and may inject resources to extend the service to a wider market. However funding limitations usually mean that such services are heavily restricted.

Subsidy arrangements do not accommodate younger non drivers, particularly secondary and tertiary level students and first job employees or apprentices. The shortage of public transport in rural situations often places additional pressure on local governments to provide access and relieve isolation. Current subsidy arrangements do not accommodate transport needs of geographically isolated groups who do not have private car access; young school leavers fall into this category.

The value of community provision is in providing a flexible need responsive service. However, locally provided transport can diminish support for existing state provided services and threaten the market for other local providers such as taxis.