

Transport Forum 2010 Report

'Delivering effective transport in rural areas'



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Background

What is the Transport Connections Project?

From a State wide perspective Transport Connections is an \$18.3 million Victorian Government investment and a Joint initiative of the Department of Planning & Community Development, Department of Transport, Department of Human Services and the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development

There are 32 Transport Connections Projects in Victoria. Each project helps to deliver small-scale localised transport initiatives across the State. For example, extending the routes of existing services and the implementation of new trial services. The Golden Plains Shire Council's project is called the *Golden Connections* project.

What does Transport Connections mean for the Golden Plains Shire?

Transport is one of the most significant barriers to accessing services, employment, recreation and social networks and has been identified in numerous community consultations across the Golden Plains Shire.

Transport Connections means;

- Communities working together for a common goal
- Community participation and active involvement in identifying the issues that are affecting the community
- Connecting communities to each other and major regional centres
- Creating access to medical, food, shopping, entertainment, education and transport services

The *Golden Connections* project aims to build local partnerships to develop innovative solutions to local transport issues, while utilising (where appropriate) existing transport assets like taxis, buses, community buses and volunteers.

Why run the Transport Forum?

In April 2009 as part of the Golden Connections Project, the Golden Plains Shire Council hosted a Partnership Meeting as a means of reconnecting with past partners and establishing links with new partners. One of the outcomes of the Partnership Meeting was to host an annual transport forum with the aim of each partner taking on the responsibility each year.

The Department of Planning & Community Development also provided each project with a \$10,000 partnership grant. This grant also assisted Golden Plains Shire Council to run the forum.

The choice to focus the Transport Forum on rural issues came about through attending numerous transport forums that focussed solely on Metropolitan issues and data. The decision to base the forum around broad rural issues instead of Shire specific issues was done to attract a wider range of participants and partners. Utilising well known and respected people in the transport field to present at the forum further strengthened this decision.

Transport Forum Agenda

- 9:30am **Registration and Morning Tea**
- 10:00am **Welcome and Opening Speeches¹**
Golden Plains Shire Council CEO - Rod Nicholls
- 10:15am **Key Note Address: Is delivering effective transport in rural areas possible?**
Chief Research Officer Monash University - Dr Janet Stanley
- 10:45am **Innovative Uses of Existing Transport**
Proprietor Timboon Taxi Service - Sandra Marcos
- 11:05am **L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program**
L2P Program Coordinator VicRoads - Greg Ryan
- 11:35am **Public Access on School Buses - Let's GET Connected - case studies, barriers and a way forward**
Let's GET Connected Project Coordinator - Rhonda James
- 12:05pm **Bus Solutions in Rural Areas**
Transport Planning & Policy Manager Bus Association of Victoria - Chris Loader
- 12:35pm **Networking Lunch**
- 1:20pm **Is Community Transport the Answer?**
South West Community Transport Coordinator Western District Health Services - Becky Morton
- 1:45pm **Geelong Area Update**
Barwon South West Regional Officer Department of Transport - Larissa Scanlon
- 1:55pm **Grampians Region Update**
Grampians Regional Manager Department of Transport - David Ward
- 2:25pm **Google Earth Asset Management System Platform**
Grampians Regional Officer Department of Transport - Peter Gross
- 2:55pm **World Cafe Style Discussion Groups**
Facilitated Director Community Services Golden Plains Shire - Jill Evans
- 4:00pm **Forum Close**
Mayor Golden Plains Shire Council - Cr Jenny Blake

¹Australian Labor Party Upper House Member of Parliament Gayle Tierney was organised to officially open the Transport Forum, but due to external circumstances has to cancel. Golden Plains Shire Council CEO Rod Nicholls opened the Forum in place of Gayle Tierney.

Transport Forum Participants

The following people participated in the Forum:

- Dr Janet Stanley Chief Research Officer Monash University
- Professor John Stanley Bus Association Victoria
- Sandra Marcos Proprietor Timboon Taxi Service
- Greg Ryan L2P Project Coordinator VicRoads
- Becky Morton Coordinator South West Community Transport
- Chris Loader Transport Planning & Policy Bus Association of Victoria
- Rhonda James Transport Connections Coordinator East Gippsland Shire Council
- Larissa Scanlon Regional Officer Barwon South West Department of Transport
- David Ward Regional Manager Grampians Department of Transport
- Peter Gross Regional Officer Grampians Department of Transport
- Jenny Blake Mayor Golden Plains Shire Council
- Jill Evans Director - Community Services Golden Plains Shire Council
- Sam Lovejoy Transport Connections Coordinator Golden Plains Shire Council
- Robyn Hemley Transport Connections Coordinator Grampians Pyrenees Flexible Transport
- Joanne Richie Grampians Pyrenees Flexible Transport
- Gail Reid Program Manager Uniting Care Ballarat
- Bob Reid Transport Connections Coordinator Uniting Care Ballarat
- Jenny Lewis Transport Connections Coordinator Surf Coast Shire
- Damian Waight Team Leader - Community Development Golden Plains Shire Council
- Rodney Gardner Proprietor Gardner's Bus Service
- Marike Knight Victorian Taxi Association
- Alexandra Tascas Social Inclusion Unit Department of Human Services
- Skye Cook Team Leader - Aged & Disability Services Golden Plains Shire Council
- Quimby Masters Transport Coordinator Beaufort & Skipton Health Service
- Peter Rademaker Community Engagement Manager Department of Planning & Community Development
- Des Trotter CEO Trotters Coaches
- Con Patista General Manager Trotters Coaches
- Tony Hazendonk Trotters Coaches
- Garry Moorfield Transport Connections Coordinator Corangamite Shire Council
- Catriona Ebeling Transport Connections Coordinator Colac Otway Shire Council
- John Huta Transport Connections Coordinator Wyndham City Council
- Lauren Woolnough Community Engagement Officer Department of Planning & Community Development
- Andrew Wallace Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator Highlands LLEN
- Barry Christian Christians Bus Company
- Jaclyn Reriti Team Leader - Health & Wellbeing Golden Plains Shire Council
- Rod Nicholls CEO Golden Plains Shire Council
- John Dixon Service Coordination Industry Advisor Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership
- Stephen Armstrong Chairman Ballarat Taxis Co-op Ltd
- Mary Benson Department of Transport Social Policy Unit
- David Cotsell Councillor Golden Plains Shire Council
- Geraldine Frantz Councillor Golden Plains Shire Council
- Matthew Dawson Human Services Manager Golden Plains Shire Council
- Michael Hynes Team Leader - Recreation Golden Plains Shire Council

Transport Forum Presentations

Please note:

All presentations are available for download at www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au. From the home page just click on the tabs Services ▶ Community services ▶ Transport Connections. You will also find information on all available transport in the Shire with links to timetables, Viclink and Google Maps.

Key Note Address:

Is delivering effective transport in rural areas possible?



Dr Janet Stanley
Chief Research Officer
Monash University

Dr Janet Stanley delivered an in depth presentation around transport in rural areas, why it is important and most importantly how it can be achieved. The presentation covered three main areas Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability with additional Case Studies.

Speaker information

Prior to her current role, Janet was Senior Manager, Research and Policy at the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. Janet's current research interests are in relation to social policy, transport, equity and policy on climate change, bushfire arson, social exclusion, social capital and community development, and project evaluation.

Janet is a member on the Ministerial Advisory Council for the Victorian Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Innovation. Janet has many publications and speaks widely in Australia and internationally. Books include: No Way to Go: Transport and Social Disadvantage in Australian Communities

Innovative Uses of Existing Transport:



Sandra Marcos
Proprietor
Timboon Taxi Service & Crater to Coast Bicycle Hire

Sandra's presentation was on innovative uses of existing transport as relating to her businesses Timboon Taxi Service, Crater to Coast Bicycle Hire and Great Ocean Walkers Shuttle Service. Using the Taxi Service Sandra is able to take passengers to and from bike rides along the Crater to Coast Rail Trail. Sandra also uses the Taxi Service to take passengers to and from different locations along the Great Ocean Road as part of the Great Ocean Walkers Shuttle Service.

Speaker information

Sandra is the owner operator of three local Timboon businesses, namely the Timboon Taxi Service, Crater to Coast Bicycle Hire and Great Ocean Walkers Shuttle Service. Sandra has lived in Timboon for the past 10 years having moved from the Yarra Valley where she was involved in the taxi service. Sandra is here today to discuss innovative uses of existing transport as related to her businesses.

L2P Project:



Greg Ryan
L2P Project Coordinator -
VicRoads

Greg provided information on the VicRoads L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program. The L2P Program helps young learner drivers acquire their 120 hours of compulsory driving training. The program targets young drivers who do not have access to a vehicle or do not have anyone to help them practise driving. Golden Plains Shire and Wyndham City were highlighted as areas where the L2P Program was yet to be established. Greg also showed a 5 minute DVD as part of the presentation which is not included in this report.

Speaker information

For the last 30 years Greg has worked in the area of Education, Road Safety and Promotion. In this time he has developed many multifaceted programs within the areas of Education and Road Safety.

At present, Greg is employed by VicRoads as the State Coordinator for the L2P program, having previously been employed as a Regional Road Safety Coordinator and Traffic Safety Education Consultant with VicRoads.

Prior to this, Greg was employed as a teacher with the Department of Education, culminating in a position as Principal and has also been engaged as a course coordinator and lecturer with Monash University in the Education Faculty.

Let's GET Connected - Case Studies, barriers and a way forward:



Rhonda James
Transport Project Coordinator
East Gippsland Shire Council

Rhonda presented information on the Victorian School Bus Network, public access on school buses, the challenges around current Department of Education & Early Childhood Development School Bus Policy and the Case Studies of the Bemm River & Seaspray School Bus Trials.

Speaker information

Rhonda James is the transport project coordinator for the Let's GET Connected Gippsland Transport Project with the East Gippsland Shire Council.

In her current role Rhonda has researched, developed and facilitated local, regional and state-wide flexible transport solutions for rural remote Victoria using a community capacity framework within an action research model.

Rhonda has over 20 years experience working in the public and private sectors in economic development, law, sports management, vocational training, research and community development. Rhonda holds degrees in law and social sciences.

Bus Solutions in Rural Areas:



Chris Loader

Transport Planning & Policy Manager
Bus Association of Victoria

Chris delivered an excellent presentation on the challenges for public transport, measuring current needs & service provision, service design for rural public transport, bus operators and community transport and opportunities to better utilise school buses. His presentation challenged the current practises in the public transport, school bus and community transport sectors.

Speaker information

Chris is the Manager of Transport Planning and Policy at Bus Association Victoria (BusVic), which is the peak body representing Victorian route, school, tour and charter bus operators. Chris has been with BusVic for almost five years and works with all levels of government, public transport operators, business groups, universities and the community sector developing and advocating policy solutions for more sustainable transport outcomes.

Chris represents the bus industry on various policy working groups, including the Victorian Road Based Public Transport Advisory Council. Chris's policy interests include climate change, transport planning, transport demand analysis, social inclusion, peak oil, and urban planning.

Is Community Transport the Answer?



Becky Morton

South West Community Transport Coordinator
Western District Health Services

Becky's presentation demonstrated what community transport is, the advantages and disadvantages, the history of the program, her role as Coordinator and a case study example of how community transport can work effectively in rural areas.

Speaker information

Becky has worked in the community transport sector for over seven years as Coordinator of the South West Community Transport Program which covers five local government areas in South West Victoria. Her role also involves support of ten community transport providers ranging from services in small rural communities to those based in larger towns.

As a member of the Victorian Community Transport Association (VCTA) committee she has been involved in organising a number of successful conferences and forums in regional and metropolitan locations. She has also been involved in drafting VCTA responses to new legislation, such as the Bus Safety Act, that could impact on community transport providers.

Barwon South West Region Update:



Larissa Scanlon

Regional Officer - Barwon South West Region
Department of Transport

Larissa provided information on the Barwon South West Regional Team, current activities happening around the greater Geelong area, updates on town bus services, V/Line Coach Services and currently operating Transport Connections Trial Bus Services.

Speaker Information

Larissa has worked in the public transport and social transit sector for over three years as Regional Officer with the Department of Transport which covers the Barwon South West region of Victoria. Her role also involves being a partner and member of 7 Transport Connections programs which look to provide mobility solutions to rural and isolated towns.

As a Department of Transport representative she has been involved in the establishment of Phase 3 of the Transport Connections Program including working closely with DPCD and the Social Transit Unit within the Department of Transport.

Grampians Region Update:



David Ward

Grampians Regional Manager
Department of Transport

David delivered a detailed presentation about the activities of the Grampian Regional Office of Department of Transport spanning four years, focussing extensively on the City of Ballarat, project costs and outcomes.

Speaker information

David is highly qualified with extensive experience in the local government sector, private industry and in State Government Agencies in both NSW and Victoria.

As the Grampians Regional Manager, David is responsible for all inter-town, inter-regional and inter-state long haul coach services, town transit services and the free school bus system. He also oversees infrastructure projects throughout the region along with behavioural change programs.



Google Earth Asset Management System Platform:

Peter Gross

Grampians Regional Officer - Bus and Regional Services
Department of Transport

Peter wowed the audience with a high tech demonstration on how Google Earth can be used effectively as an asset management platform and best practise opportunities for data sharing between regions and projects. Google Earth is user friendly, free and allows for easy data sharing between State and Local Government and also partner agencies. As part of his role, Peter offers Google Earth Training to all Grampians Region Transport Connections Projects.

Speaker information

Peter is a Regional Officer with the Department of Transport which covers the Grampians region of Victoria. His role also involves working with the Transport Connections Projects located within the Grampians region

Peter developed data plotting with the Google Earth platform to help the dissemination and sharing of data to local TCP projects, LGA's and contractors for easy access to information on a free image platform.

World Cafe Style Discussion Groups

Facilitated Director Community Services Golden Plains Shire - Jill Evans

The World Café session was designed to be a fun ending to the Transport Forum and to allow the expertise of the participants to be shared with Golden Plains Shire Council. The term World Café is a style of information gathering designed around informal conversations, good food, good coffee and set questions or themes. For more information on World Café please visit www.theworldcafe.com

During afternoon tea, participants were divided into five groups and sent to answer five set questions that were displayed on windows in five separate rooms around the Smythesdale Hub. The answers to each question were written on individual 'Post It' Notes and stuck onto the display question.

The questions were designed to provide the Golden Connections Project with answers that would assist in planning for the 3rd Phase of Transport Connections Project Funding for 2010 - 2013.

World Café Questions & Responses

1. Footpaths & Bike Trails

Issue: Footpaths and Bike Trails are a great community asset and provide a safe environment for people to exercise through walking or riding and simply travelling around their local area.

Question: How can communities be encouraged to use their local footpaths and bike trails more often?

Responses:

- Shared Pathways
- Improve surfaces and access to starting points
- Integrated, well designed rails and paths.
- Robust signage, distances measured.
- Special events/ days
- Lighting
- Walking School Buses
- Have Bike Hire Available.
- Talk
- Recreation takes a different path
- Maps and signage
- Advertise
- Promotion and marketing around incentives, fun and activities, all ages.
- Promotion by key people in sports/art/etc.
- Existence and Engineering
- Appropriate Routes
- Linking schools, shops, medical and health.
- Link Public Transport.

2. Travelling to work

Issue: Many people choose their own car as their main mode of travel to work.

Question: How can people be encouraged to walk, ride, car pool or catch public transport to work?

Responses:

- Make school crossing access easier to obtain.
- Improved bus shelters, protection from the elements.
- Better information about available options.
- Planning around destinations/precincts. Walking and bike pathways E.O.T. Facilities.
- Better bike paths between towns.
- Integrated planning between outlying communities and major destinations eg. Creswick, Beaufort, Ballarat, Bunninyong. For public transport/car interface.
- Public Transport am/pm from my door.
- Bring back horses and horse paddocks at school.
- I would catch public transport if I could get to work on time (8:30am) and leave on time (5:00pm). Currently I cannot do this so I take the car.
- From Barunah Park? From Mannibadar? From Wilgul? From Warrambine?
- Prizes
- Fund Public Transport on attractive service level: Frequency, Directness, Long Span of Hours.

3. Steering Group

Issue: The Golden Plains Shire Transport Connections Project is entering a new phase of funding from 2010 - 2013 and as such its project scope is expanding. The project will now include the larger regional transport issues faced by the Grampians and Barwon South West Regions as well as the local issues faced by Golden Plains Shire.

There will be a complete shift away from Public Transport to make way for more community focussed initiatives that connect people to;

- Health and other services.
- Employment and learning opportunities.
- Social and other participation activities.

In light of this, the Golden Connections Steering Group will be opening its doors to all current project partners to be part of the new, revised Steering Group.

Question A: What would make being a member of the Golden Connections Steering Group more attractive to existing project partners?

Responses:

- Is there a benefit to my organisation?
- Some quick positive results.
- Information for prospective partners (transport providers) about what their service may be able to provide to the TCP Project.
- Clear aims and objective explained.
- What's in it for them?
- Virtual/Online Steering Group

Question B: What regional issues can you identify?

Responses:

- Young people, Transport for Communities and Access to Education.
- Connected, engaged, heard and empowered.
- Working collaboratively between regions
- Both Grampians and Barwon South West Regional Offices
- Young people (secondary school) out of school hours transport.
- Highlands LLEN

4. Community Transport

Issue: Community Transport Vehicles are generally used during regular business hours but have periods of downtime outside of regular business hours, including weekends.

Question: How could these vehicles be used more effectively during periods of downtime?

Responses:

- Take people in groups on social outings eg Zoo
- Develop a timetable for organisations to access Community Transport or planned activities. This would provide equitable access. Booking systems can lead to one group dominating.
- Take people without transport to supermarkets & shopping centres that are open 9am-5pm.
- Home delivery of shopping.

- Sporting clubs transport.
- Regional Accessibility Council to coordinate longer use.
- Youth & Sport activity accessibility.
- Extra funding to duplicate staff and/or volunteers/shift workers.
- General hire at reasonable cost.
- Create a common pool of vehicles allowing multiple organisations to access them.
- L2P Projects
- Better information about insurance issues.
- Bonus funds if you release your Community Transport Vehicles to the Community.
- Funding program based on demonstration of broad community use - frees up usage.
- Have available from private house.

5. Community Engagement

Issue: Community engagement is a vital part of any community planning. It allows us to give information, receive feedback and provide opportunities for community participation. Youth can often be a difficult group to engage in community planning processes.

Question A: What strategies are effective for engaging youth in the community?

Responses:

- Highlands LLEN
- Smart Geelong Region LLEN
- Youth engagement Leadership Programs
- Music
- Beach Surf Activities
- Talking with youth about how/what they want to be involved in.
- Regional Youth Affairs Network
- Give them (youth) something they are interested in.
- On buses.
- Text Messaging
- Youth, I don't know, having lots of trouble myself
- School based leadership programs
- Facebook, Twitter etc.

Question B: What strategies are effective for engaging all communities?

Responses:

- Have a good challenge for people to attend.
- Link into existing activities eg. Community event.
- Community Engagement Portal for online comment.
- Strengthening Generations Program

Future Directions

Due to the success of the Transport Forum and the recent 2010 -2013 Transport Connections Funding Announcement from Department of Planning & Community Development, the Transport Forum will be an annual event in Golden Plains Shire. Future forums will continue to focus on rural issues, rural data, practical examples and learnings from rural based transport projects.

During 2010 - 2013 the Golden Connections Project will refocus its objectives to be inline with the new Department of Planning & Community Development funding requirements and project directions. As part of the shift, the Golden Connections Project will be completing a three year Strategic Plan to guide the project. The Project will also be evaluating its steering and partnership groups and making changes where appropriate.

Opportunities for Involvement

The Golden Connections Project is seeking interested partners to be part of the following groups.

1. The Golden Connections Steering Group

This group will have input into the strategic directions of the Golden Connections Project. This group is suitable for community groups, organisations and businesses in the Barwon South West and Grampians Regions which include the Cities of Ballarat & Geelong and the Golden Plains, Moorabool, Pyrenees, Corangamite, Surf Coast and Colac Otway Shires.

2. Public & Community Transport Providers Working Group

This group is specifically for Public and Community Transport Providers who would like to provide input into the project. This group will focus on promotion of public and community transport services, current trial services, service delivery gaps, identified community needs and project/funding opportunities.

3. Local Area Project Groups

These types of project groups are suitable for any community groups, businesses or organisations who are interested in increasing transport options in their local area.

4. Keep me in the loop

You will be part of an email distribution list which will receive web links to bi monthly project updates and other project related material.

If you are interested in being part of any of these groups please contact the Transport Connections/Healthy Ageing Facilitator Sam Lovejoy on 5220 7189 or slovejoy@tplains.vic.gov.au