

Remote Community Transport Guiding Principles and Tools

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Acronyms

You will find the following acronyms in this document.

Acronyms	Full form
ACNC	Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
ACTA	Australian Community Transport Association
APTIA	Australian Public Transport Industrial Association
BIC	Bus Industry Confederation
CVL	Commercial Vehicle licence
DDA	<i>Disability Discrimination Act</i>
NTC	National Transport Commission
WHS	Work Health and Safety

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Table of Contents

1	Background	4
1.1	Purpose.....	4
1.2	Community transport services.....	5
1.3	Challenges for remote community transport.....	5
1.4	Factors for successful community transport.....	6
1.5	Factors leading to less successful community transport.....	6
2	Establishing Community Transport	7
2.1	Community engagement and capacity building.....	7
2.2	Establish a working group.....	8
2.3	Establish an organisation.....	9
2.4	Understand community needs.....	11
2.5	Identify who will run the service.....	13
2.6	Operational design and delivery.....	14
2.6.1	Service delivery models.....	14
2.6.2	Service design.....	16
2.6.3	Routes and schedules.....	19
2.6.4	Bookings.....	20
2.6.5	Fares and charges.....	20
2.7	Establish policies and procedures.....	20
2.8	Identify operational costs.....	21
2.9	Recruit employees and volunteers.....	21
2.10	Implement the service.....	21
2.11	Promote the service.....	22
3	Regulatory Requirements	22
3.1	Accreditation, licences and registration.....	22
3.2	Work health and safety.....	23
3.3	Disability standards.....	24
3.4	Peak transport bodies.....	24
4	Funding Sources	25
4.1	Government funding.....	25
4.2	Foundations and funding organisations.....	25
5	Resources and further reading	26

1 Background

The Transport and Infrastructure Council endorsed the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy on 6 November 2015.

The Strategy's core aims are to maximise investment opportunities in transport infrastructure and services, minimise regulatory burden, improve coordination across borders and governments, and influence policy development relevant to remote and regional transport.

The key Strategic Action 4 of the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy is to:

Develop a community transport framework that supports the use of existing services and resources to develop sustainable community driven passenger services to improve linkages between remote communities and towns providing services.

The project examined grassroots community driven initiatives operating across remote and regional areas to identify potential approaches to addressing common issues and barriers to transport service provision.

It was determined that beyond existing coordination efforts, the role of government is to ensure that communities are equipped with the appropriate tools to ensure that transport solutions are designed to meet the specific needs of a place, comply with all relevant legislative regulations and standards, are viable, and financially sustainable.

This document is a condensed version of the project's work tailored to the Northern Territory context.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide for the development of a community transport initiative including regulatory considerations, governance and funding, planning, operations and evaluation.

The information is intended to assist:

- local community members who have identified transport needs, but have no previous experience of organising transport;
- existing transport providers;
- other organisations that might have vehicles, drivers and other resources that could be used more widely; and
- local authorities.

1.2 Community transport services

Community transport is a safe, affordable, and flexible form of transport, run by the community for the community. The aim is to engage communities by offering services shaped by the people to create a noticeable and lasting social and economic benefit for the community.

Community transport provides a lifeline in both rural and urban areas, catering for a variety of needs, such as taking people to work, school, healthcare, sporting events and the shops. Transport services facilitates interactions which assists community inclusion and cohesion.

The types of community transport services provided are very diverse and developed to suit the circumstances of each situation. These can range from very small car schemes with volunteers using their own vehicles, flexible door-to-door minibus pick up services, as-required charter bus services to special events, through to formal timetabled bus routes.

1.3 Challenges for remote community transport

The provision of passenger transport in remote and very remote regions is, at best, patchy. Apart from long distance bus and rail services, a high proportion of land-based passenger transport is not provided by recognised transport operators and instead by health and community care agencies.

There are numerous reasons for this which include:

- too little demand to warrant or sustain scheduled public transport services;
- regulatory barriers such as driver requirements and vehicle standards;
- long distances to essential and other services or to line-haul transport such as long distance bus and/or air services;
- higher costs due to fuel prices, the need to use more expensive, robust vehicles (e.g. 4x4s) and greater maintenance costs associated with remote and often off-road services;
- need for redundancy in fleet increasing operating costs;
- limited access to vehicle maintenance facilities in remote locations;
- poor condition of roads which lead to long journey times and damage to vehicles.
- intermittent or no access to certain roads at certain times of the year;
- constrained funding or subsidy programs for remote transport services especially given the low population densities in remote locations;
- low ownership of private vehicles, and thus vehicles available in the 'pool' for shared use;
- limited coordination of transport services or resources – services are spread across a range of agencies and are mostly for medical/health care purposes;
- limited capacity in local communities to coordinate the establishment of community vehicle registers to share vehicle use, coordinate resources and plan/develop new community-driven transport services; or
- difficulties in finding and sustaining suitably qualified and trained staff, particularly drivers.

1.4 Factors for successful community transport

The background research undertaken for the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy highlighted the importance of different levels of government and industry sectors, businesses and local communities working together effectively.

The three main members of this collaboration are:

- The **promoter** or 'champion' of the scheme, idea or need for a community transport service.
- The **operator** of the community transport service.
- The **funder** of the community transport service.

Common factors include:

- devolution of decision making to local communities;
- governments supporting flexible, collaborative systems;
- a clarity of purpose and a common mission;
- incentives that support behaviours that contribute to improving local mobility/accessibility and increase community capacity;
- adequate budget, including funds for administration, staffing, community engagement, implementation, communications, data collection and evaluation;
- community engagement, relationship building and capacity building;
- flexibility in service design, allowing for adaptation to seasonal demands, catering for special needs and special event requirements; and
- integrating existing transport services commissioned by government agencies and provided by different operators or individuals.

1.5 Factors leading to less successful community transport

Common factors include:

- difficulties obtaining drivers and limited volunteer drivers;
- restricted hours of operation, too few services are available during the day or week, or services are limited or not provided at all in the evenings or on weekends;
- restrictions, modified services that prioritise medical appointments over social contact or services that are only provided for particular uses such as school bus services;
- clubs, activity centres or organisations investing in vehicles without consideration of operational factors and issues (e.g. accreditation, insurance, driver training, ongoing maintenance etc); or
- lack of available information and/or poor communication and promotion of transport options

2 Establishing Community Transport

There is no 'one size fits all' governance and operating model for remote community transport. It depends on regulatory frameworks, location, the level of transport disadvantage, the socio-demographic profile and particular transport needs, the level of resources and coordination, and the involvement of government agencies and other organisations (including non-government organisations) in funding, coordinating and managing specialist transport services in communities

Community transport offers a way for communities to create a transport service moulded to local needs. It takes a group of determined and dedicated people who want to make a positive change for their community for it to work well.

2.1 Community engagement and capacity building

Significant input from the community intended to benefit from the place-based initiatives is a fundamental prerequisite to a successful venture. The model requires a shift from government-planned and coordinated transport delivery to methods characterised by forming social networks, collaboration, community engagement and flexibility.

Community engagement is critical – it will guide decision-making and help to promote a sustainable decision that is technically feasible, economically viable and publicly 'owned'.

The key purposes are to:

- build relationships;
- share information;
- listen to input from the community; and
- use the input to improve services and service delivery.

The [International Association for Public Participation](#) has developed tools to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any community engagement program. Differing levels of participation are legitimate depending on the goals, timeframes, resources and levels of concern in the decision to be made.

Please refer to the iap2 public participation spectrum at www.iap2.org for a useful checklist and examples of engagement techniques.

When considering engagement activities, be mindful of the type of community, its socio-demographics and cultures. For example, some remote communities may have a low level of literacy and therefore engagement activities should focus on face-to-face meetings and forums.

Some key considerations when conducting consultation include:

- Make sure that all people in the community are respected and able to participate and have a say. Make sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are involved in a way that is culturally appropriate. If uncertain of how to do this, connect with a local person who can provide an introduction and local background information or seek advice or local contacts from www.indigenous.gov.au.
- Consider the way in which information is presented for people who do not speak English or come from another culture.
- Do not assume that everyone can read or write, find ways for people to input other than filling out forms or commenting on written topics; often maps and pictures are better than words.

For small rural and remote, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

- In most communities, the local paper/newsletter has a wide distribution and readership.
- Local radio stations, ABC local radio stations, and Indigenous radio stations are a useful means of distributing information to people on remote properties. Whilst nothing beats face to face interactions, radio may be an effective adjunct outreach.
- Internet and social media platforms are useful but only when cost and technological literacy enable access.
- Sporting matches, cattle sales, and other local events that attract community members are an effective means of reaching the community in a face to face manner.

Personal outreach is the preferred approach. Applications/technology would be the least effective communication mechanism.

To grow capacity in the community, the development of key community champions is vital. Champions are individuals within the community who are well respected and invested in service and community improvement. These champions are consulted throughout the change process such that they can provide input, and filter this information through to the community.

Importantly, the community should look to grow as many champions as possible; it can be draining to have this responsibility sit with a very limited number of individuals. Building the number of champions will naturally increase the robustness and sustainability of the service system.

To assist with building community capacity, resources are available on the following websites:

- [Australian Government Department of Social Services – Communities and Vulnerable People](#)
- [QLD Department of Communities – Community Capacity Building Toolkit for Rural and Regional Communities](#)

2.2 Establish a working group

If a need for transport has been identified that cannot be addressed by current transport providers then a new community transport scheme may be an option. A working group should be established to fully explore this.

A working group should include a representative from all potential stakeholder groups such as the community, community groups or organisations, existing community transport provider and public transport operator, transport associations, the local authority and/or community council.

When forming a working group, a 'Terms of Reference' is helpful as it formally sets out why the working group was brought together and the aims and objectives of the group. The Terms of Reference does not need to be a detailed document but everyone in the working group should be involved in its development so there is a clear understanding of the group's mission, processes and responsibilities.

Committee Terms of Reference

Typically the Terms of Reference is a written road map for the committee and contains clear and specific information on how the committee is organised, what the committee is trying to achieve, who the members are, and when and where they meet. A clear and understandable Terms of Reference is the first step to a successful committee.

Below are typical sections of a Terms of Reference document. Each section needs to be customised to the unique needs of your committee.

- **Committee Name**, Official name of the committee or group.
- **Type**, Can be standing, ad hoc (special project) or advisory (related to another board, committee or project).
- **Purpose**, Describe the purpose of the committee (what the committee will do, why it was created).
- **Scope**, Clearly describe what is in and out of scope for the committee.
- **Authority**, Describe the decision making authority of the committee (decides, approves, recommends, etc).
- **Membership**, Type and number of members, how members are appointed, how the chair and co-chair are appointed and a list of members (name and functional role).
- **Meeting arrangements**, Meeting frequency and location, meeting procedures (if applicable), quorum, details about agendas and minutes (how these will be distributed, available online, who prepares them, etc), communication between meetings.
- **Reporting**, Describe whom the committee will report to, in what format, how often.
- **Resources and budget**, Describe the available resources (people, rooms, equipment, etc) available to the committee, and describe the funds available to the committee.
- **Deliverables**, Describe the requested/required committee output.
- **Review**, State the Terms of Reference review frequency and next review date.

2.3 Establish an organisation

When starting a business or organisation, it is important to choose a structure that suits the operational needs now and into the future. Take time to plan, it will help in achieving goals, as well as identifying possible challenges or risks.

Keep in mind that if funding will be required, it is crucial when establishing an organisation to decide whether it will be **for-profit** or **not-for-profit** as it will directly affect the sources of funding available.

For example, only for-profit organisations can be funded by equity purchased by investors; and only not-for-profit organisations can seek tax deductible gifts. Most charitable grants are only available to not-for-profit organisations. Section 4 provides more information around funding sources.

If the working group decides to incorporate, the people involved will need to make a decision about which incorporated legal structure will best suit the aims, activities and culture of the organisation.

The [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission](#) (ACNC) registers organisations as charities. The ACNC website provides a [useful checklist](#) that offers guidance in establishing an incorporated legal structure.

For the latest information about business licences, permits, registrations and available funding contact the [Territory Business Centre](#) on 1800 193 111 Monday to Friday during business hours.

Organisation constitution

A constitution is a set of fundamental rules, principles and/or established standards according to which an organisation is governed. A constitution is an important document; every organisation has one, it is used to assist with decision-making so take time to develop a strong constitution.

The constitution should include the following:

- **Organisations Name**, Official name of the transport scheme.
- **Type**, Can be standing, ad hoc (special project) or advisory (related to another board, committee or project).
- **Objectives and Purpose**, Describe the purpose of the organisation.
- **Scope**, Clearly describe what is in and out of scope for the committee.
- **Authority**, Describe the decision making authority of the organisation (decides, approves, recommends, etc).
- **Membership**, Type and number of members, how members are appointed, how the chair and co-chair are appointed and a list of members (name and functional role).
- **Meeting arrangements**, Meeting frequency and location, meeting procedures (if applicable), quorum, details about agendas and minutes (how these will be distributed, available online, who prepares them, etc.), communication between meetings.
- **Reporting**, Describe to whom the organisation needs to report to, in what format, how often etc.
- **Funding and budget**, Describe the available resources (funding, people, rooms, equipment, etc).
- **Deliverables**, Describe the required output the Organisation needs to meet.
- **Review**, State the ToR review frequency and next review date.
- **Insolvency**, Detail what happens to the organisations assets if it runs out of funds and becomes insolvent (unable to pay bills). It is important to note that trading while insolvent is illegal, whether a for-profit business, a charity or a volunteer-dominated community organisation.

2.4 Understand community needs

The working group may all agree that there is a local transport need, however, clear evidence to prove that need exists is required to develop the right kind of community transport service and assist with funding applications.

The two key pieces of evidence that should be collected and assessed are current transport options and community need.

Transport options

For example, bus routes and times, community transport services already available, coach services, charter operators, taxis, any formalised car or van sharing arrangements, minibuses owned by community groups that are made available to others etc.

Conduct an audit of vehicles that exist locally or regularly visit the area. This will help determine if opportunities exist to build on current resources.

Below are some basic questions to consider:

What existing vehicle(s) are there?

Are there vehicles owned by public agencies, organisations, schools or local council that are:

- not used every day;
- sit idle for much of the day; or
- used for short periods and or events.

What existing service(s) are there?

- What are current travel options?
- Who are their passengers?
- Could the existing transport services be modified or expanded?
- Does the current service provider have plans to modify or expand the current service?

What options are there to collaborate services?

Consider if services were combined (or a collaboration coordinated), would they provide a more comprehensive transport service than individual services.

- Is there an opportunity to form a partnership for a new community transport scheme?
- Could existing services be incorporated as an element in a new community transport scheme?

If vehicles and services exist, explore whether it would be practical to incorporate them in a community transport scheme.

Transport need

Engage with the community to identify transport needs through a survey, hold a public meeting or talk to relevant stakeholders. It is also important to consider if there are any cultural or disability reasons that may prevent some people from travelling on the bus.

To assist with forming a better understanding of travel patterns and needs refer to census data which is available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) at www.abs.gov.au/census_data. For example a community with:

- Working/training adults (aged 17 to 65) without cars may need supplementary transport for journeys (work, education, training programs).
- Children and people over 65 are more likely to need transport for special purposes (education and medical).
- Non-working adults may be accommodated mostly in the off-peak periods, and not necessarily requiring transport services to run frequently or daily (to get to shops, services, and so on).

The following ABS tools may also provide data to support an identified transport need:

- [Quick Stats](#) makes high level, at-a-glance Census data available for most areas, from small areas to a State/Territory and National level.
- [Community Profiles](#) are excellent tools for researching, planning and analysing geographic areas for a number of social, economic and demographic characteristics.
- [Regional Profile](#) data provides ease of access to statistics from the ABS and other sources on a particular geographical region.

Below are some basic questions to consider:

Who needs to travel?

- Male / female.
- Age groups.
- Mobility needs.
- Cultural needs.

How many people need to travel?

- Individuals.
- Large groups.

What time do they need to travel?

- Morning.
- Midday.
- Afternoon.
- Evening.

How often do they need to travel?

- Daily.
- Weekends only.
- Weekdays only (Monday to Friday).
- Once a week.
- Once a fortnight.
- Once a month.

Why do they want to travel?

- Work.
- Training programs.
- Shopping.
- Visiting friends or relatives.
- Medical / healthcare appointments.
- Sport training.
- Sport events.
- Other.

How far do they need to travel?

- Within town.
- To the next town or community.
- Other.

2.5 Identify who will run the service

When identifying options consider the following:

An existing agency or transport operator

There may be an organisation/operator in the community that is already established and well placed to take the community transport initiative forward.

A partnership arrangement between existing organisations

Where no single existing organisation has the spare capacity to take on the new development alone, it may be possible to combine resources among several existing organisations. For example, a local authority might offer a depot facility for vehicles, a business organisation or individual takes on a coordinating role and other partners offer a pool of volunteers.

If this is the preferred option, it is important to draft a partnership document that will agree and clearly set out the key responsibilities and expectations on each partner to avoid any misunderstandings later.

Before buying a new vehicle, or setting up a new scheme

Consider if the community may be better served by coordinating existing resources for effective use of the available transport services.

Different providers may already serve the community but may not be coordinated well. A single agency could channel community transport requests to the operator or organisation that is best able to meet the specific needs of each passenger.

This will improve efficiency, as individual providers do not have to struggle to meet requests for services that are out of their area or need specialised vehicles. Any time saved can then be used to fit in more of the trips that the operator can do effectively. Passengers also benefit from only needing to remember one contact point for all their travel needs.

It is strongly advised not to purchase a vehicle until you have a sound model to fund the purchase.

A new organisation

Where there is no possibility of any existing organisations taking on a new community transport project, it may be necessary to consider establishing an entirely new organisation.

This will involve deciding on the type of organisation to establish, drafting up the governing documents, appointing a management committee and formally constituting or incorporating the new organisation.

Be aware that establishing a new organisation can sometimes take time to complete which could possibly mean a temporary halt to the development of the community transport scheme. However, if a new organisation is the best option, the time involved is necessary to create the right kind of transport service for the community.

2.6 Operational design and delivery

It is important to build a strong foundation of principles, policies, funding, and collaboration with community to fill the current gaps in public transport provision in remote communities.

Once that foundation is clearly defined and firmly in place, it is then appropriate to move forward.

The information in this chapter briefly outlines the important next steps: how the stakeholders develop, design and deliver community transport services.

The discussion is intentionally strategic, briefly outlining the key steps in planning, design, and delivery. This document provides resources that may assist agencies, communities, and service providers in planning and implementing community transport services.

2.6.1 Service delivery models

While the physical construction of community transport services may be reasonably straight forward, designing sustainable service models of delivery has proven to be the largest stumbling block. There are a range of delivery models available, which have been broadly raised in preceding sections of this document.

The key delivery models which have merit for remote passenger transport delivery are:

- **Community Transport Project (Stand Alone Service)**

Either community-driven largely by volunteers, or delivered by a public transport provider/community not-for-profit organisation under a contract/service agreement with the State or Local Government or another organisation.

- **Alliance**

An alliance model involves several operators working together to provide services to common clients. The way this is achieved varies from alliance to alliance and can include referring and brokering clients, group bookings and sharing resources. Alliances are generally set up to foster collaboration with stakeholders who have shared geographic interests.

- **Central Coordination Agency**

A central coordination agency model comprises of a single coordinating body which acts as a brokerage or referral agent. The referral agency may also be a service provider in its own right and/or have its own vehicles available for brokerage. The agency provides full integration of services and 'pools' vehicles from different public transport sectors such as taxis, buses, volunteer cars and community organisation vehicles. This model requires technology and strong governance between different providers to be successful.

[The Victorian Transport Connections program](#) is an example of the central coordination agency model.

- **Community Collaboration**

Regional Collaboration Groups, consisting of public and private organisations and community champions, are established to provide greater coordination, cooperation, and flexible use of resources amongst local transport providers and government agencies. QLD, WA, and NSW apply this approach to some extent.

The key functions of a Regional Collaboration Group are to:

- promote collaborative relationships between key stakeholders;
- establish transport working groups and/or engage in established transport forums;
- support projects aimed at reducing transport disadvantage in rural areas;
- getting better value and more tailored services from the transport infrastructure already in place;
- enhanced transport brokerage using existing resources; and
- improving links between transport providers and transport users.

The strengths of this approach include:

- the community is involved in identifying the transport needs and working together to find solutions;

- the approach can bring together all transport operators (buses, taxis, Community Transport, other community vehicle owners) as well as community representatives of users;
- community ownership, responsibility, and pride in solutions;
- increases the likelihood that the service will be patronised; and
- allows a wide range of flexible options which is especially important in small communities where the market is not large enough to warrant a regular transport service.

However, this model can involve difficulties in:

- maintaining financial sustainability;
- determining a consistent approach for determining need, and hence the allocation of project funding; and
- developing an appropriate process of evaluation as these types of projects do not always readily lend themselves to quantifiable evaluation.

• **Social Enterprise**

Social enterprise models are businesses with a primary “social objective whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners”.

These types of models usually incorporate a range of services.

The characteristics of a social enterprise model include:

- an over-riding social purpose;
- reinvesting profits for community benefit;
- holding assets in trust for the benefit of the community;
- accountability to their constituency and independence from external influence and control;
- requires strong governance; and
- requires development of alternative businesses to support core aims.

The [Social Traders](#) website provides more detailed information to assist with a better understanding on how social enterprises operate in Australia.

The [Australian Stories of Social Enterprise](#) report provides a useful overview of Social Enterprise along with demonstration projects throughout Australia.

2.6.2 Service design

A range of schemes are possible for community transport, depending on the community's needs and the specific location/governance and operating environment. These range from scheduled public transport services through to a raft of flexible transport and demand-responsive services (substituting or supplementing traditional public transport operations).

Figure 1 and 2 match typical solutions with populations and demand. These are not strict, guidelines but they do illustrate the demand typically required to support sustainable services.

Figure 1 Typical solutions with populations and demand

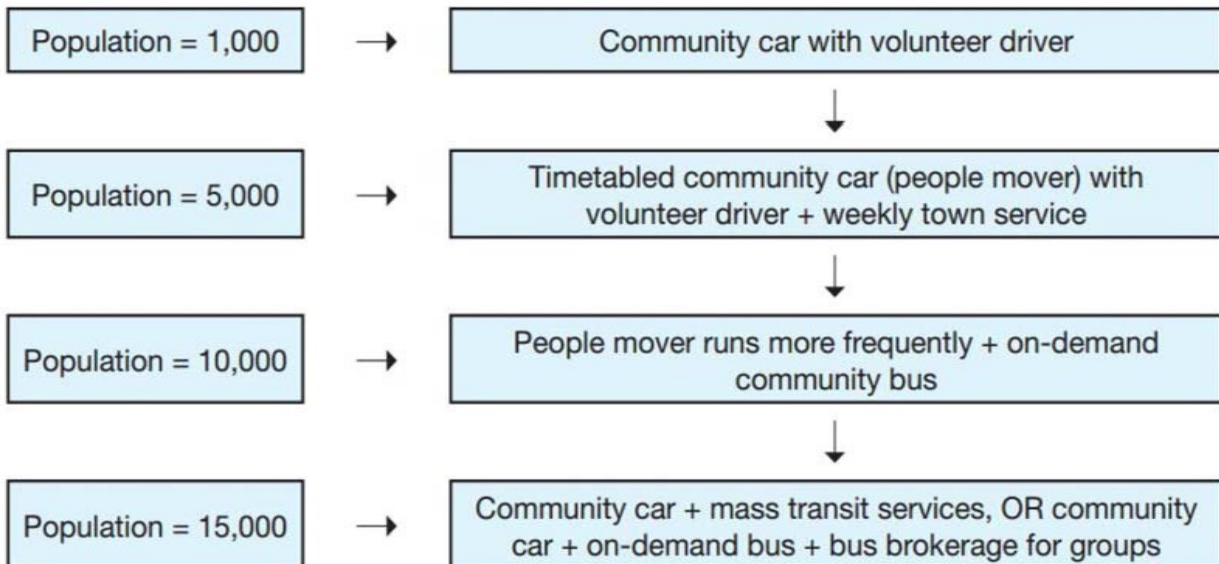


Figure 1 is sourced from the Queensland Transport and the Local Government Association of Queensland [Community Based Transport Guidelines 2006](#).

Figure 2 Matching passenger numbers to transport options

Type of service	Service users
Co-ordinating existing services	<i>Moderate to large numbers of people who have a diverse range of needs</i>
Improving an existing service	<i>Moderate numbers of people wanting to travel regularly to the same places at the same time</i>
Bus clubs	<i>Moderate numbers of people wanting to travel regularly to and from the same place at the same time</i>
Community buses	<i>Small to moderate numbers of people wanting to travel regularly to the same places at the same time</i>
Shared-use operations	<i>Small numbers of people wanting to travel regularly to the same place and at the same time as an existing service which is provided by an organisation which does not normally carry passengers or is not usually available to all members of the community</i>
Minibuses	<i>Small numbers belonging to specific groups wanting to travel only occasionally to different places or to the same place</i>
Taxibuses/shared taxis	<i>Small numbers wanting to travel occasionally or regularly to the same place at the same time</i>
Community car schemes	<i>Very low numbers wanting to travel only occasionally to different places or to the same place</i>

Figure 2 is sourced from Steer Davies Gleave and Transept [Rural Community Transport A Guide to Good Practice](#).

There are many differing ways to configure a community transport solution. The following four configurations are the key approaches:

- interchange connection;
- public transport network;
- destination specific shuttles; and
- substitute and specialised services.

Depending on the location, all four configurations may be present and viable. In the most isolated communities, substitute services may be the only option that can be provided.

2.6.2.1 Interchange connections

This configuration provides “feeder” links to conventional public transport.

For places where demand is low and/or very dispersed, a fixed-route feeder is not viable - but still could be provided on a regular/guaranteed basis (once a week for example in more remote settlements) to provide residents with the option to access larger provincial areas for non-urgent medical and general shopping/visiting.

If settlement patterns are dispersed and potential demand is low, then some form of demand-responsive mode instead of a scheduled route service may be a viable option. The type of

vehicle required will vary according to the size and nature of the area served, patronage demand and distances/terrain travelled.

2.6.2.2 Networks

Network configurations consist of scheduled public transport, usually contracted on a route or service area basis, on a gross-cost or cost-plus basis, usually for a period of three to seven years.

Contracts may be offered to current local public transport operators or via a competitive tendering basis depending on the size of/competition for the market. In remote and rural settings, a common approach is to offer 'first right of refusal' contracts/service extensions to existing local providers.

2.6.2.3 Destination or specific events

This configuration serves particular destinations such as airports or employment locations. However, they may also simply consist of a charter service to a weekend sporting event. Passengers are collected directly from their homes, hail and ride services, or congregate at central collection points.

Financially, these can be self-contained, as they are generally not used to form a trip-chain and there is usually motivation from a commercial entity to assist with funding or sponsorship to provide the special charter/shuttle.

2.6.2.4 Substitute services

Substitution occurs when a more flexible transport service replaces a public transport service.

The key rationale is that efficiency gains may be realised through merging with conventional public transport services or reducing the strain on these services with substitute services.

In some remote communities, it will be significantly more efficient and more economical to provide flexible transport services either in association with fixed route public transport services or as substitutes for the higher order transport services.

2.6.3 Routes and schedules

Along with type of operator and type of fleet, a variety of route/schedule choices also need to be considered, depending upon the location, population density, and specific characteristics and requirements of the local community.

Fixed routes

Service journey departing from an end point (terminal) either at prescribed times (e.g. regular bus routes) or on-demand.

Semi-fixed routes

Departs from an end stopping point (terminal) at prescribed times. Stops at any fixed intermediate points at prescribed times. Deviations to other stopping points may be made upon request.

Flexible routes

Departs from an end stopping point (terminal) at prescribed times. The vehicle only calls at stopping points upon request. This type of service may also be referred to as a checkpoint

service, where vehicles serve designated stops at scheduled times but operate in demand-responsive mode between stops.

Area-wide

No fixed end or intermediate stopping points. No scheduled departure times from any stopping point. Limited by operational hours and area limit. Only calls upon request.

In summary, for remote communities the over-arching service design framework is most likely to be a 'collect and connect' design. This involves a network of basic scheduled services between higher and lower order settlements and non-conventional services to bring those in isolated areas from their homes to the nearest towns. This model most efficiently meets the sustainable transport provision and social inclusion objectives.

2.6.4 Bookings

The role of technology is also increasingly important. In a coordinated setting, an appropriate investment in technology can help with several tasks that are important to more efficient coordination:

- scheduling passenger trips;
- assigning passenger trips to the transportation vehicles available within the coordinated system;
- tracking rides and service use across multiple agencies with different eligibility, billing, and reporting requirements; and
- tracking activity and performance for monitoring and reporting purposes, both within the coordinated transportation system and within the community at large.

While this may be beyond the capabilities and capacities of a local community, development of booking systems will enhance regional coordination, and will certainly enable States/Territories to better track the outcomes of their funding investments.

2.6.5 Fares and charges

There are a few schemes which do not charge passengers. The cost of providing transport is met from grants, donations or subsidies offered by other organisations. For most schemes, it is essential to get some income from passengers to help meet costs. It is usual to start by looking at the cost of similar local bus trips to decide how much it would be reasonable to charge. There may be a good case for charging a little more where the service offered is door-to-door, or very high quality.

There may be justification for lower fares in an area where people who could benefit from the service are put off by the prices.

Fare scales based on kilometres travelled can be either 'flat rate' or 'tapered scale'. Most bus companies use tapered scales which means the further a passenger travels the less it costs for each kilometre.

You can collect fares on the vehicle or you can bill passengers (or the relevant social services agency) every month for trips they have made.

2.7 Establish policies and procedures

Before any services are provided to the community, the committee will need agreement on a number of key policies and procedures, including:

- **Operational**

Ensure that regulatory compliance obligations are outlined and processes to meet compliance requirements are developed. Refer to section 3 for more information.

- **Finance**

Ensure good financial control systems are in place to operate the finances of the scheme.

- **Insurances**

Ensure that adequate insurance is in place, covering all aspects of the scheme such as vehicle, public liability, and employer liability.

2.8 Identify operational costs

Costs must be identified before a decision can be made on how to meet those costs. Draw up a breakdown of costs i.e. costs of the project being run by a new organisation compared to the costs of it being run by an existing organisation.

List direct costs (e.g. purchase of vehicles, fuel, permits, insurance, registration, volunteer expenses, salaries, maintenance etc.) and indirect costs (e.g. rent, office costs, marketing, utilities etc.) as well as any revenues such as fares or fare contributions/membership and user donations. Creating a cashflow statement can be the best way to assess the cost implications of the choices you make. Chapter 4 lists a range of funding sources currently available in Australia for community transport ventures.

2.9 Recruit employees and volunteers

Be clear about what you want your employees and volunteers to do, what training is on offer and what the work conditions will be. Ensure work conditions and pay are compliant with Fair Work Australia. It is important to interview the employees and volunteers and carry out the correct licence and police checks. Set clear employment responsibilities and be aware of the procedures which should be put in place for recruitment, staff training and development, health and safety obligations, reporting and cash handling etc.

2.10 Implement the service

The following points outline a typical action plan, but the exact content needs to reflect your particular situation:

- **Aim / Objective** – the overarching work area, aim or objective. This will help keep the actions focussed and in context.
- **Actions to be completed** – based on the aim or objective, think through the various steps that will need to be taken to achieve that aim or objective.
- **Reason for action** – this is not always necessary to include, but it can be very useful to remind everyone why an action is important. This is especially helpful if you will be delegating actions to people who were not involved in creating the action plan so they understand how their work feeds into the bigger picture.
- **Responsibility** – assign each action to a specific named person or persons whenever possible. Make sure the person knows about and agrees to the responsibility they have been assigned; they can then be justifiably held accountable and asked to explain why an action is not or might not be completed on time.

- **Cost** – any costs attached to a particular action. Even if you will not be spending physical money, time may be considered a cost.
- **By when** – set realistic timeframes for each action because the whole purpose of the action plan is to keep things moving forward. Setting unrealistic timeframes will undermine the value of your action plan and could place unnecessary pressure on everyone and/or cause your project to lose focus.

Review progress of the action plan regularly to ensure things are getting done and to discuss any issues that may be preventing progress. Usually, monthly review meetings are sufficient, unless your timeframe is very tight in which case weekly (or even daily) reviews might be needed. Use your judgement to decide how frequently you review the action plan.

2.11 Promote the service

Marketing and promotion are vitally important to the success of a community transport scheme.

From the first public meeting, which gauges interest in the idea of a community transport service in the local community, it is important to maintain publicity throughout the scheme's development to ensure that there will be ongoing commitment from the community.

Plan a highly visible launch and community 'celebration' event. Invite members of the community, especially those who have been involved in setting up the scheme, including volunteers, local and state agencies, business sponsors, and owner / operators of the various fleet that form part of the scheme.

It is important to communicate to individuals and groups information about who you are, what transport service you provide, when the service starts, where the service is operating (the area it services), why there is a need for community transport in your local area, who the service is intended for, and the conditions of travel (if there are any).

When the service is up and running, it will be necessary to continue to promote the service and provide general service information to the local community. Ensure that you maintain clear and current travel schedules for the community to easily access.

Social media is an effective and efficient tool to assist with keeping the community engaged and informed of service changes. Engaging a Champion(s) is also a good way of keeping the messages alive and promoting the service in the community.

3 Regulatory Requirements

Each State or Territory is responsible for regulating and managing the passenger transport legislation. The following is a list of regulations and standards that must be considered when establishing and operating a community transport service in the Northern Territory.

3.1 Accreditation, licences and registration

Buses and coaches that operate in the Northern Territory are subject to local provisions about passenger transport services, as well as accessible transport standards. Passenger transport operator accreditation requirements exist in every State and Territory of Australia.

The three mandatory requirements needed to operate a commercial passenger vehicle (CPV) in the Northern Territory are:

- accreditation in the NT;

- Commercial vehicle licence (CVL); and
- registration of CPV.

All drivers of CPVs must have:

- a current NT driver licence;
- a CPV licence (H endorsement);
- a commercial passenger vehicle identity card; and
- a [working with children clearance, also called an Ochre Card](#).

The Northern Territory [Commercial Passenger Vehicles Unit](#) provides guidance on how to get an [endorsement to drive](#) and where to obtain training and industry information.

3.2 Work health and safety

Under the Australian system of government, the States and Territories are responsible for making laws about workplace health and safety and for enforcing those laws.

The following legislation applies in the Northern Territory and is administrated by [NT WorkSafe](#).

- [Work Health and Safety \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011 \(NT\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety \(National Uniform Legislation\) Regulations \(NT\)](#)

NT WorkSafe is a division under the Department of Attorney-General and Justice responsible for assisting businesses and workers to understand their obligations under work health and safety, dangerous goods, electrical safety, and rehabilitation and workers compensation in the Northern Territory. NT WorkSafe officers are available to provide advice and information to assist in making workplaces safe.

NT WorkSafe works with Territory businesses and workers by:

- setting the safety standards to ensure that businesses and workers meet their responsibilities under the law;
- explaining and interpreting laws and standards and by providing businesses and workers with guidance materials; and
- helping businesses and workers meet their responsibilities through workplace visits, advice, audits and inspections.

Key resources available on the NT WorkSafe website are:

- [Business rights and responsibilities](#)
- [Worker rights and responsibilities](#)
- [Volunteers rights](#)
- [NT WHS Codes of Practice](#)
- [The Essential Guide to WHS for Organisations that Engage Volunteers](#)

- [Northern Territory Fatigue Management – Road transport code of practice](#)

3.3 Disability standards

Arrangements in relation to bus operations must aim to reflect the principles and intent of the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (DDA) and the [Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002](#).

The DDA prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability, both to the person with a disability as well as family members, carers and friends.

In response to the second review of the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* the Australian Government published [The Whole Journey Guide: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys](#) in 2017.

The guide is a useful tool for transport planners and providers, additional information can be found at <https://infrastructure.gov.au/transport/disabilities/whole-journey/>

3.4 Peak transport bodies

The [National Transport Commission](#) (NTC) is an independent statutory authority focused on national reform of Australia's road, rail, and intermodal transport networks. The National Transport Commission maintains laws and rules, such as the National Heavy Vehicle Law, Australian Vehicle Standards Rules, Australian Road Rules, fatigue regulations and driver medical standards that promote industry safety. Once reform proposals are approved by ministers at the Transport and Infrastructure Council they are implemented by state and territory transport departments and agencies.

The [Australian Public Transport Industrial Association](#) (APTIA) operates under the [Fair Work \(Registered Organisations\) Act 2009](#), as a federally registered organisation. APTIA is the industrial arm of [Bus Industry Confederation](#) (BIC).

The BIC represents the interests of its members to Governments and the community on a range of issues including technical vehicle and parts based issues to the broader challenge of meeting the growing passenger transport task and providing Australian commuters with a genuine alternative to the car.

APTIA represents and assists its Members in negotiations relating to the settlement of disputes between members and their employees and promotes and protects the interests of employers within the passenger transport industry (publicly and privately owned).

The [Australian Community Transport Association](#) (ACTA) provides a national voice for the community transport sector.

ACTAs purpose:

- provide a forum for the State Associations and the State Representatives to meet and to discuss matters of mutual interest;
- represent Community Transport providers within Australia;
- provide information and support to its community transport providers in Australia;
- develop policy and standards that promote best practice in community transport organisations; and
- promote Community Transport issues throughout Australia.

4 Funding Sources

There are numerous government and non-government funding resources available to organisations or businesses. However there are always eligibility requirements and conditions that must be met. Whilst receiving a grant is good, it is important to check conditions attached to any grant before applying for and accepting it. For example, the Northern Territory Government requires all funding to be reported on and acquitted in accordance with grant agreement requirements.

The organisation may wish to seek legal or accounting advice on the financial and other possible implications that receipt of a grant (particularly a large grant) will have on the organisation.

ACTA provides assistance with compliance issues, planning and operations, and with funding or grant applications. More information can be found at <https://communitytransportaustralia.org.au/>

Legal help for not-for-profit community organisations

[Not-for-profit Law](#) is a not-for-profit community organisation that provides legal help for not-for-profit community organisations.

4.1 Government funding

The [Northern Territory Business Centre](#) offers information, funding and development services to improve the performance, profitability, employment levels and service delivery of Territory businesses, not-for-profit organisations and Aboriginal enterprises.

The Australian Government business.gov.au website search tool can assist with finding grants and other funding programs for business from federal, state and territory governments, and some local councils. A variety of grants are available in many categories, including growing and diversifying a business, taking an idea to market and employing people.

The Australian Government Department of Social Services [Community Grants Hub](#) website offers service providers information about Commonwealth Government grant opportunities and helpful information to support organisations seeking grants to deliver community services and support.

The Northern Territory Government currently provides funding support to remote transport operators through the Remote Passenger Transport Program.

4.2 Foundations and funding organisations

There are also a number of foundations that offer grant funding depending on the type of services provided. Each foundation will have specific eligibility criteria and guidelines that must be met to receive funding. Some foundations are:

- Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal: <https://www.frrr.org.au/index.php>
- Bennelong Foundation: <https://www.bennelongfoundation.com/fundingareas>

[Philanthropy Australia](#) is a peak body who serve a community of funders, social investors and social change agents working to achieve positive social, cultural, environmental and community change by leveraging their financial assets and influence. It consists of approximately 800 trusts, foundations, organisations, families, individual donors, professional advisers, intermediaries and not-for-profit organisations. For funding opportunities, visit the Philanthropy Australia fund seeker page: www.philanthropy.org.au/seek-funding/

5 Resources and further reading

For easy use, the following resources have been divided into sections.

Government assistance resources:

- Northern Territory Government Business Support Services: <https://nt.gov.au/industry/start-run-and-grow-a-business/business-support-services>
- Northern Territory Government information on incorporated associations: <https://nt.gov.au/law/rights/incorporated-associations>
- The Australian Taxation Office guidance on types of not-for-profit organisations: <https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/Know-your-legal-structure/>
- Australian Securities and Investment Commission: <https://www.asic.gov.au/>
- Australian Government Indigenous Affairs website: <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/>
- The Australian Government Business website: <business.gov.au>
- The Australian Government Community Grants Hub: <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/>
- Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations: www.oric.gov.au/
- National Transport Commission: <https://www.ntc.gov.au/bus-coach/>

Building community capacity resources:

- The Australian Community Transport Association: <https://communitytransportaustralia.org.au/>
- Communities and Vulnerable People: <https://www.dss.gov.au/communities-and-vulnerable-people>
- Queensland Government Department of Communities: http://www.emergencyvolunteering.com.au/docs/Community_Capacity_Building_Toolkit.pdf
- International Association for Public Participation Guidelines: <https://www.iap2.org/page/guidelines>
- The Not for Profit Law Information Hub: <http://www.nfplaw.org.au/settingup>

Operational design and delivery resources:

- Local Community Transport Services: Transport Connection program <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/papers/govpub/VPARL2010-14No19.pdf>
- Australian Stories of Social Enterprise: [www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/Australian Stories of Social Enterprise - April 2011.pdf](http://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/Australian_Stories_of_Social_Enterprise_-_April_2011.pdf)
- Social Traders: <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/>
- Rural Community Transport – A Guide to Good Practice *produced by Steer Davies Gleave and Transept*: <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/159230/0043330.pdf>
- Queensland Transport and the Local Government Association of Queensland *Community Based Transport Guidelines 2006*: http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/~media/Travelandtransport/Public%20transport/Community%20based%20transport/Pdf_community_based_transport_guidelines.pdf