# Turning the wheel of Geelong's Community Transport Network

Leaders for Geelong Program 2008 - 2010

Research Project

Committee for Geelong

Leaders for Geelong

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# 1 Introduction

This Paper is the final deliverable from the Turning the Wheel of Geelong's Community Transport Network Syndicate Group. This Group was formed as part of the Leaders for Geelong Program 2008 – 2010 intake and this Report represents the culmination of a Research Project that began in February 2009.

The purpose of this document is to investigate the existing community transport within the Geelong Region and identify any transport gaps that exist. In addition, we will conduct a comprehensive research of the existing community transport progams that exist locally and develop an understanding of models adopted nationally and internationally, identify the drivers of demand for community transport and recommend community transport projects that would be complimentary to Geelong.

This document will also provide support to the Auspicing Agency, being City of Greater Geelong, in making a submission to the Victorian Government's Transport Connections Program for a funded Community Transport Program in the City of Greater Geelong. It may also deliver a framework for Regional Community Transport planning and delivery.

# 2 Definitions

There are a series of key definitions that need to be commonly understood when reviewing the content of this Report.

## 2.1 Auspicing Agency

The Auspicing Agency is responsible for overseeing a Transport Connections Program from a governance perspective, including the acquittal of any funds that are allocated.

## 2.2   Community Transport

Transport offered by organisations that :

- are non-statutory (not required by law)

- are democratic

- are locally based

- are not for profit

- involve users in decision making

It provides transport solutions for those members of the community who are identified as being transport disadvantaged. The word community is key, as the goal of Community Transport is to make the community accessible to all people.

Community Transport tends to be a more tailored solution to the needs of individuals or groups with special needs.  Examples include an unscheduled bus route which only picks up passengers who have prebooked their trip. The service may run at a loss but is compensated by the benefits of greater mobility for disadvantaged individuals and communities.

Community Transport can be a better solution over a commercial fixed route service for passengers with special needs.

*Section 2.2 quoted from Ashby, Jenny, Laurie, Dymphna, Richardson, Joanne & Ciliak, Mary, Getting There : The Impact of Community Transport on the Home and Community Care Program and Service Users : Future Directions, Villamanta Publishing Services, June 1997 quoted in In Touch Through Transport.*

## 2.3   Demand Responsive Transport

Demand Responsive transport is a key component of Community Transport.  This transport mode often includes an element of flexibility in that the transport service may deviate from their usual route to pick up and drop off passengers at their home or destination.  It makes the service more attractive to many users, including the elderly and those with a mobility constraint.

## 2.4    G21 Region

The G21 Region extends from Corio Bay and Port Phillip Bay along the Coastline to beyond Apollo Bay, inland through the Colac district and north to the Golden Plains Shire. Definition : http://www.g21.com.au/



**Figure 1: G21 Region Outline; http://www.g21.com.au/**

## 2.5    Integrated Transport System

The fully inclusive transport system that encompasses all modes of transport that people use to move within our communities. Figure 2 identifies all of the modes of transport that fit within the Integrated Transport System.  The most efficent means of catering for the transport needs of the community can only be achieved when the right balance of each transport mode within the Integrated Transport System is applied.
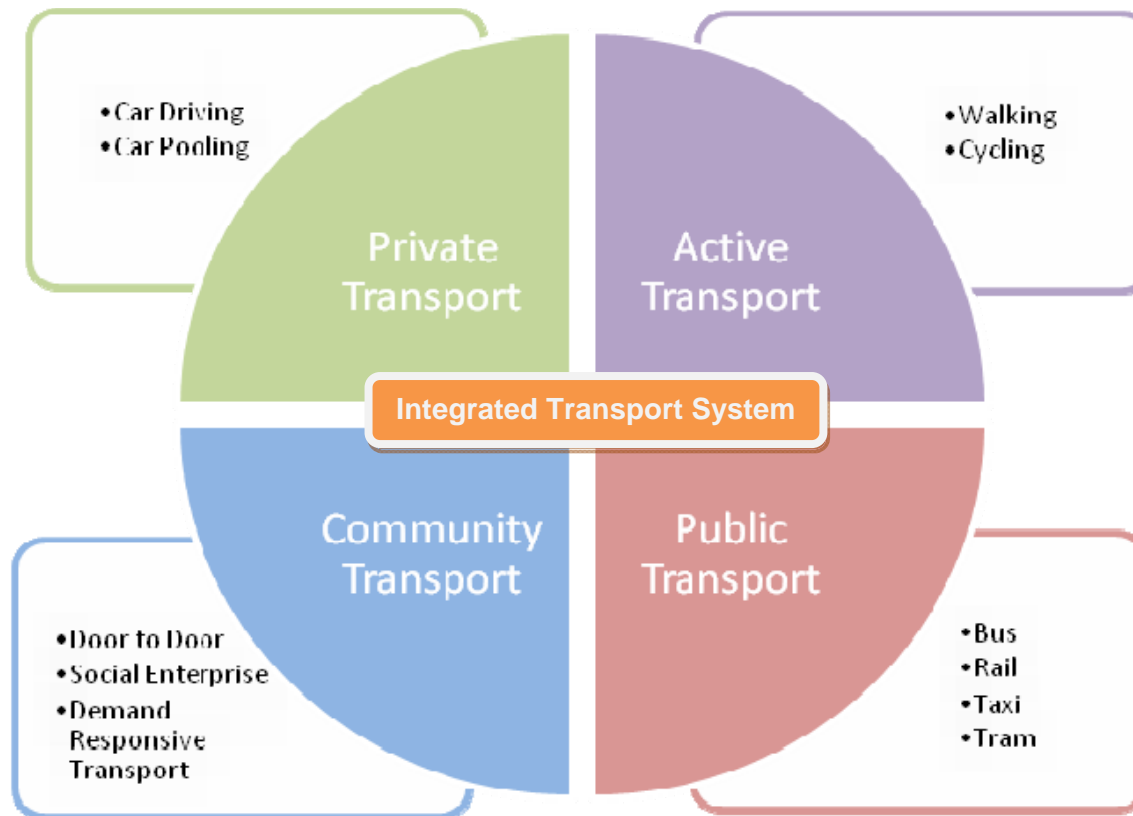


**Figure 2: Integrated Transport Model**

**2.6    Public Transport System**

A coordinated method of transport service delivery usually involving a combination of transport modes including potentially trains, trams, buses, taxis and ferry services.

**2.7    Transport Connections Program**

Transport Connections is a Victorian Government initiative that involves the following departments; the Department of Planning and Community Development, Department of Transport, Department of Human Services and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.  The Program provides a funding framework to develop and deliver a structured method of providing Community Transport with a specified aim to assist local communities to develop local solutions for local transport issues.

Each project within the program involves the establishment of working groups within a community, the employment of a coordinator and the development of a range of transport initiatives. Through the development of local partnerships and the use of existing assets and services such as taxis, school buses, community buses and volunteers, communities are able to develop innovative transport solutions that can make participation within the community easier for people with limited access to transport.

There are currently 32 Transport Connections projects in regional, rural and outer metropolitan Victoria.

**2.8    Transport Disadvantaged**

Those people who have limited or no access to private transport and have difficulties in accessing the other modes in the Integrated Transport System.

Three measures that can indicate the level of Transport Disadvantage within a community include the level of household car ownership, the number of people within a community that have a physical disability and the geographic location of transport and community services within a community.

## 3    Environmental Context

Geelong is Victoria's second largest city, located 70 kilometres from Melbourne.  The variety of it's lifestyle offerings together with the infrastructure and services able to be accessed in Geelong and Melbourne and the job opportunities available in both locations has increased the Region's popularity as an attractive location to live.  In 2008, the City of Greater Geelong had a population of 212,032 residents out of a G21 regional population of 278,078. It is predicted that the population will increase from 278,078 to 355,277 by 2026. The rationale for this growth continues to be both the lifestyle options that are available in the Region together with it's proximity to Melbourne.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Projections at a more granular level are as follows :

| Municipality | 2008 | 2026 | Growth Rate (% pa) |
|---|---|---|---|
| City of Greater Geelong | 212,032 | 269,653 | +1.4% |
| SurfCoast | 23,966 | 34,781 | +2.0% |
| Colac Otway | 21,249 | 23,116 | +0.4% |
| Golden Plains | 17,681 | 24,378 | +1.8% |
| Queenscliffe | 3,150 | 3,349 | +0.2% |
| Total (Barwon Region) | 278,078 | 355,277 | +1.4% |

**Table 1: The Australian Bureau of Statistics**

*Source :Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Estimated Resident Population, June 2008' Department of Sustainability & Environment, 'Victoria in Future 2008'*

The infrastructure that is necessary to support this growth in the Community is placed under significant stress. The outcome of an inadequate infrastructure is that the community can become fragmented and more of the community may be at risk of social isolation. Ensuring that an Integrated Transport System is available is a key component that supports community inclusiveness.

John Brumby in his foreword to the recently released *A Fairer Victoria – Real Support – Real Gains* (May 2010) states the following:

***"We must make sure all of our services are accessible to the people who need them most. We must intervene early to help vulnerable Victorians before they reach crisis point. And we must make sure that communities all around Victoria are friendly and welcoming places, well-connected to the services they need to prosper".***

One of the deliverables from a Fairer Victoria has been **to develop liveable communities that are safe, cohesive and have the facilities people need to live active and fulfilling lives.** Priority Area Four in the Fairer Victoria plans involves the building of liveable communities. The Report recognises that the upscaling of efforts relating to local community will be one of the factors in delivering this Priority. Further the report also recognises that resources are to be allocated to improve facilities in northern Geelong as part of the Corio-Norlane regeneration project including improving the general amenity of transport services in the area.

The City of Greater Geelong has a variety of transport options available via Bus, Taxi and Rail. There has been a signficant focus on improving these services. For example, an enhanced Public Transport Bus Service was introduced in September 2009 with a focus on increased services, longer operating hours, new routes to Deakin University and Marshall Station (e.g. to and from Torquay / Jan Juc Peak Hour service) and seven new low-floor buses to improve access for the elderly and people with disabilities. Further, a new central bus interchange is to be created in central Geelong.

However, within this community there remains a cross section that are unable to access these services. This situation may be temporary where services may not currently be available in the specific location where they live, work or socialise. In some cases, it may be a more permanent situation where people may never be able to utilise the existing transport infrastructure. Community Transport can provide a suitable alternative method of transport to those that are transport disadvantaged.

The proposition of the Syndicate Group is that within Geelong, transport disadvantage influences the extent to which the community can be engaged. The experiences the group has shared in the Leaders For Geelong Program, and the Syndicate Group's exposure to disadvantage in the Geelong community, has strengthened this proposition.

Through the existing Transport Connections Program, there are already a series of Transport Connections Projects delivering Community Transport solutions in the G21 Region that primarily focus on the Regional Areas including the Surf Coast / Colac Otway, Golden Plains and Bellarine areas. The basis for these areas having a Transport Connections Program has been due to the need to focus in more rural, less populated locations, which tend to lack public transport and taxi services. Further, identification of transport gaps is easier to identify in these communities.

This paper describes the Transport Connections Program, documents our research identifying areas within the City of Greater Geelong that are already transport disadvantaged. Further it identifies broader transport issues as well as innovative Community Transport solutions through researching other Community Transport programs within the Region, elsewhere in Victoria, interstate and overseas.

## 4    Syndicate Group Project Framework

### 4.1    Objective

To contribute to a Transport Connections funding application for the Geelong region that supplements both the existing Public Transport Network and the Transport Connections Projects within the G21 Region.

### 4.2    Scope

The scope of the Research Project identified the following key activities :

- Undertake research from three distinct perspectives:

    - Conduct a review of the existing Transport Connections Projects in the G21 Region.

    - Conduct community based local research to identify other areas of transport demand that are not currently being serviced.

    - Research other states and countries to identify and critique Community Transport Networks that are in place.

- Based upon the research findings, recommend services that could be delivered as an element of a Community Transport Program within the Geelong Region.

- Work with Stakeholders to identify an auspicing agency for the application.

- Work with an auspicing agency to contribute to a Transport Connections application for Geelong to be submitted in the next round of DPCD funding.

## 5    Project Philosophy

The philosophy of the Syndicate Group is that a Transport Connections Program in the City of Greater Geelong should complement and not compete with the pre-existing transport services, in line with an Integrated Transport System for Geelong.  A function of any Transport Connections Project should be to actively promote all Transport offerings within the City of Greater Geelong. Our Research indicates that the more successful programs actively co-exist with the existing Service providers and in fact leverage the services offered by these Transport providers through brokering specific solutions to meet specific local needs.

The establishment of a Transport Connections Program in a central area should be able to leverage a significant amount of existing transport infrastructure that may in fact be under utilised.  There is a real opportunity to harness this capacity to deliver a range of Community Transport options. In some cases, Community Transport can fill a void where the Public Transport network may not initially be able to readily deliver a service. For example, a new Housing estate may be developed and it may not be realistic to establish a Public transport service prior to it being fully populated. In this case, a Community Transport option may be an appropriate entry level option. Statistics could then be captured about service utilisation. If the demand for a service necessitates that it be incorporated into the Public Transport Network, then the services should be "handed over" and the Community Transport Network could then focus upon the next community demand to be serviced.

It is fundamental that the delivery of any Community Transport service be measured to assess the outcome as compared to the original proposal.  A number of examples were identified during our research of strong Community support at the Service proposal stage, but limited support once the service was actually delivered. It is critical that an expectation be set at the time of Service planning that a "Use it or lose it" approach will apply or community transport efforts will be redirected to services that are supported, thus delivering an improved outcome within the Community.

## 6    The Transport Connections Program

Transport Connections is a joint initiative of the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), Department of Transport (DOT), Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). Research conducted as part of the overall Transport Connections program has highlighted that:

> *Transport is consistently rated by rural and regional communities as one of the*
> *most significant barriers to accessing services, employment and social networks.*

Transport Connections is one of the strategies developed to respond to this barrier and provides funding to help communities to set up working groups, employ a coordinator and develop a range of transport initiatives  Through local partnerships and the use of

existing assets and services such as taxis, school buses, Community buses and volunteers, Communities are able to develop innovative approaches that can make participation in community life easier for people with limited access to transport.

The Objectives of the Transport Connections Program focus upon:

- Improving existing transport options;

- Developing innovative solutions for transport disadvantaged;

- Building strong partnerships to deliver services; and

- Ongoing community participation in decision-making and delivery of the projects.

Phase One of the Transport Connections Program was originally established in 2003 and consisted of nine Pilot projects. In 2007, Phase Two was rolled out following a further investment from the Victorian government, and was expanded to 32 projects encompassing regional, rural and outer metropolitan Victoria. An announcement of $80 million of funding over 10 years was included in the Victorian Transport Plan released in 2009. This is Phase Three of Transport Connections and funding applications will be sought commencing 2010.

The following is an extract from the Victorian Transport Plan :

> *The Transport Connections program will be expanded to help local communities in outer suburban and regional areas develop innovative transport solutions to meet local needs. Project coordinators will be funded to work with their local communities and transport service providers to identify ways of better using existing private, public and community transport resources.*

The project will continue to offer the following benefits :

- Improved connections for regional communities;

- Development of innovative and sustainable local transport solutions; and

- Improved access to health care, employment opportunities and recreational facilities

for those that are transport disadvantaged.

Further, based upon a more recent update regarding Phase Three, it is likely that in addition to the current focus of the Transport Connections Program, there will be a broader Regional focus from both a governance and initiatives perspective. Phase Three of the Transport Connections Program will build on the strengths of the existing Transport Connections program but also develops a stronger alignment with the existing Regional integrated planning and delivery focus of the Victorian State Government. The benefits of this revised approach should include:

- An opportunity to assess transport needs and be responsive when regional investment plans are being developed;

- An improved capability to meet community needs that stretch across current local boundaries; and

- Assisting Local Communities to influence policy at a regional and state based level.

With an extended timeframe for this Phase, it presents an opportunity for longer term outcomes to be planned and delivered. There will continue to be a series of key stakeholder groups, roles and functions within any Transport Connections Program that are required to be established to deliver the appropriate governance framework. These include the Auspicing Agency, Steering Committee / Reference Group, Transport Connections Coordinator and Service Proposals. As part of Phase Three, the existing Transport Connections Programs will be able to apply for an extension so that they can continue to build on the planning and delivery frameworks that have already been established in each of the projects.

## 6.1   Auspicing Agency

As part of any Transport Connections application, an auspicing agency needs to be nominated to oversee the development of a Transport Connections Program and be accountable for project delivery and monitor expenditure.

## 6.2   Steering Committee participants

Strong Partnerships are critical to the success of Transport Connections. Important Partners in a Steering Committee normally would include community members , government departments, local government, transport providers (community, public and private), non-government organisations and local businesses. They have an active interest in the Community and can contribute to Transport Connections.

## 6.3   Transport Connections Coordinator

At a Transport Connections project level, the role of the Transport Connections Coordinator is fundamental to the success of the project. Under the governance structure, each Transport Connections Program is required to have a Coordinator. They are employed by the Auspicing Agency to implement and manage the Transport Connections project. A broad range of skills are required including strong community engagement skills, negotiation / brokerage skills as well as logistics and administration skills. The role has the following key accountabilities :

- Maintaining both a strategic and operational view of the Transport Connections initiative;

- Negotiating resources and investment from key stakeholders in response to local priorities; and

- Facilitating and supporting actions being delivered as agreed in the Action Plan.

### 6.4   Service Proposals

Each individual Community Transport initiative is funded separately and a Service Proposal template needs to be completed and submitted for review and approval. The proposal needs to provide evidence of Community consultation and involvement in the planning of the new service.  Further, where possible it is preferred that people who are not currently users of a service are engaged in the process. There is a strong focus on Community engagement to attempt to build the solution into the Community and thus deliver a more sustainable solution.

## 7   Who could benefit from a Community Transport Program in Geelong ?

The following case studies highlight the transport disadvantage gaps in the Geelong Region.

### 7.1   Case Study 1

Jeff is 53 and lives by himself in Norlane.  Several years ago Jeff had a serious stroke that resulted in severe loss of muscle control in his legs and the right side of his body.  Jeff uses an electric wheelchair to get around and has support services come to assist with personal care, domestic duties and cooking.

Jeff is a very social guy and loves a chat.  He is very close to his elderly parents who live a few blocks away and he tries to visit them every week.  However due to financial constraints and the public transport available, Jeff is limited in any other type of excursions.

"I don't have enough money to catch taxis and only use these when I have doctors appointments or emergencies" Jeff states.  "I do try to get to Corio village once a week but the battery on my wheelchair often goes flat so I have to spend time at the library to recharge it.  I am so worried that it will go flat while I am out and then I will be stuck.  It is because of this that I don't go out much".

When asked about the public transport system he stated " I tried the bus once because I could not get a taxi from the city back home.  It has a ramp to get on and off, but because my wheel chair is so big there was nowhere to move inside. I was blocking everyone's way and could not even turn around.  It was not fun and I prefer not to use it again"

Jeff uses all of his support funding for personal care, and any other money he has goes into medical costs and maintaining his house.  However Jeff loves the races and footy but it is not his income that prevents him from going.  "I would like to go to the trots one night but getting there and back by myself is just too hard".

## 7.2   Case Study 2

Ingrid works as Community Aged Care Program Coordinator for Karingal and has done so for the last three years.  Ingrid's role is to assist clients who are aged and frail and still living in the community.

> *"I have a part time caseload of 16 people who live with some support in their own homes.  Most of the clients are frail and have plans to move into aged care over the next couple of years"*

Ingrid states that a major part of her role is keeping her clients active and connected to their communities.  "It is critical not just to add support into a client's home but to also increase their social connections and activities.  The biggest barrier to this is the client's reluctance to use public transport and in some case even taxis.  When this reluctance occurs to people who have no other family support, the social isolation occurs very quickly".

"There are a number of programs and services that can help but we find as a service provider, the hurdle is often transport.  Recently there has been talk of Community Transport options for our client group but they are difficult to identify, access and don't provide a real alternate solution.  It seems the desire is there for Community Transport and even the resources but no one is driving it, it does not have a coordinated approach."

## 8   Identifying the need for Community Transport

*"The Brumby Government recognises that further improvements can be made to ensure that the public transport network is accessible to all Victorians. Groups that face transport disadvantages include people with disabilities, people with young families, the unemployed, young people, people with poor health, low income earners and single parents."* (former Minister For Transport Lynne Kosky, Improving options and removing barriers-addressing transport disadvantage status report 2008)

Statistical and qualitative research clearly indicates transport disadvantaged pockets within the Geelong region, resulting in public transport gaps through social isolation. In particular postcode areas 3214 (Norlane and Corio) and 3219 (Whittington) experience the following disadvantages:

- High unemployment rates compared to the national average

- A high population of people with a disability compared to the national average

- A higher than average age demographic of 65+

- Low use of public transport

- Higher than average percentage of households without a vehicle.

## 8.1    Statistical Research

This statistics based research has primarily focused on the demographic areas which comprise the postcode areas 3214 (Corio, Norlane and North Shore), 3219 (Whittington) and 3216 (Grovedale).

The statistical information contained was provided from a number of sources listed in the Bibliography. However, there were four main information and data sources which provided the majority of data included in this report, these being:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006 Census,
- Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)
- Professor Tony Vinson's "Dropping Off The Edge, the distribution of disadvantage in Australia" report
- Profiles of Victorian Communities- findings of ABS 2006 Census.

### 8.1.1    Areas Selected for Statistical analysis

The postcode areas of 3214 and 3219 were selected because they are immediately identified in the community as being areas containing pockets of concentrated social and economic disadvantage. Postcode area 3216 (Grovedale) was selected because the area has been identified as a growth corridor. It should be noted that Government and local authorities are actively working with these 3214 and 3219 communities trying to regenerate them into self governing and sustainable neighbourhoods.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDEX FOR AREAS (SEIFA) 2006
CITY OF GREATER GEELONG
INDEX OF RELATIVE DISADVANTAGE

**Disadvantage Index**

| | |
|---|---|
| | No data available |
| | 700 -799 |
| | 800 - 899 |
| | 900 - 999 |
| | 1,000 - 1,099 |
| | 1,100 + |

Relatively greater disadvantage

mean line

MOORABOOL SHIRE

Staughton Vale

Balliiang

Little River

Anakie

Lara

Point Wilson

Lovely Banks

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Moorabool

Avalon

Corio

Bell Post Hill

Norlane

North Shore

Batesford

Bell Park

North Geelong

CORIO BAY

Hamlyn Heights

Fyansford

Geelong West

GEELONG

East Geelong

Newtown

Ceres

Highton

Sth Geelong

Newcomb

Clifton Springs

Bellarine

Portarlington

Indented Head

Belmont

Whittington

Moolap

Curlewis

Drysdale

St Leonards

Waurn Ponds

Grovedale

St Albans Park

Marshall

Leopold

Mannerim

Swan Bay

Mount Duneed

Wallington

Marcus Hill

Connewarre

Barwon Heads

Ocean Grove

Point Lonsdale

BOROUGH OF QUEENSCLIFF

SURF COAST SHIRE

Breamlea

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**8.1.2   Profile of Postcode Areas 3214, 3216 and 3219.**

### 3214 - Corio, Norlane and North Shore

Corio is both a residential and industrial area and one of the largest suburbs of Geelong. It is located approximately 9 km north of Geelong CBD.

Norlane is a northern suburb of Geelong. It is located 7km from Geelong CBD. In May 2007 a $40 million funding announcement, enabled regeneration of housing in the Norlane area with the construction of new homes and upgrades to occur.

North Shore is both an industrial and residential area overlooking Corio Bay.

The  population at the time of of the 2006 ABS census for  the 3214 postcode is 25,278 people and is divided between the suburbs as follows; Corio 14,918 and Norlane 7,933 and North Shore 317 people.

### 3219 - Whittington and surrounding areas

Whittington along with East Geelong, Breakwater, Thomson, Newcomb and St Albans Park form the postcode area 3219.

The population (2006  ABS data) of this postcode area is 19,605 people, comprising 3,832 East Geelong; 1,054 Breakwater; 1,611 Thomson, 4,506 Newcomb; 4,694 St Albans park and 4,057 people in Whittington.

Whittington is located approximately 4km south east of Geelong CBD. It was established as a sub division in the 1920s and is identified as significantly disadvantaged in socio economic and social terms.  Whilst Whittington is designated as an area of striking disadvantage, the other suburbs within the 3219 postcode are assessed as being significantly more advantaged.

### 3216 – Grovedale and surrounding areas

The Postcode area 3216 has a population of 46,301, comprising Belmont 13,645, Freshwater Creek 559, Grovedale 13,188, Highton 14,494; Marshall 560, Mount Duneed 983, Wandana Heights 1,832 and Waurn Ponds 1,040.

Grovedale is a residential suburb, located on the Surf Coast Highway linking Geelong and Torquay. Residential expansion commenced in Grovedale in the late 1960s and later expansion throughout the 1970s to the 1990s. Public transport to the area is provided by buses on routes to the Geelong city centre travelling via Deakin University, Belmont, Highton and Waurn Ponds. These services have recently been upgraded, with increased frequency and changes to the routes to provide a better service to the suburb.  Future growth is planned for the new Armstrong Creek suburb to the south where 22,000 additional houses and employment precincts will be developed.

As with all growth corridors additionals services will be eventually added but there will always be disproportionate pressure on transport, community agencies, sporting clubs and public infrastructure.

**8.1.3     Demographics of Postcode areas 3214, 3219 and 3216**

*Age Profile (% of the suburb population Australian States and territories June 2009)*

|  | Norlane | Corio | Whittington | Grovedale | Victoria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0-4 yrs | 6.6% | 7.1% | 6.5% | 6.0% | 6.2 % |
| 5-14 yrs | 13% | **16%** | **17%** | 13% | 13 % |
| 15-24 yrs | 13% | 15% | 13% | 14% | 14 % |
| 25-64 yrs | 49% | 50% | 51% | 52% | 53 % |
| 65 + yrs | **19%** | 11% | 12% | 15% | 14 % |

**Table 2: Age Profile**

The data above indicates that Norlane has a significantly higher population of 65 years plus than the state average.  With an aging population and the desire to live at home rather than institutional care, there is likely to be increased pressure to provide a transport system that provides better accessiblity than traditional public and private transport options.

*Unemployment Rate*

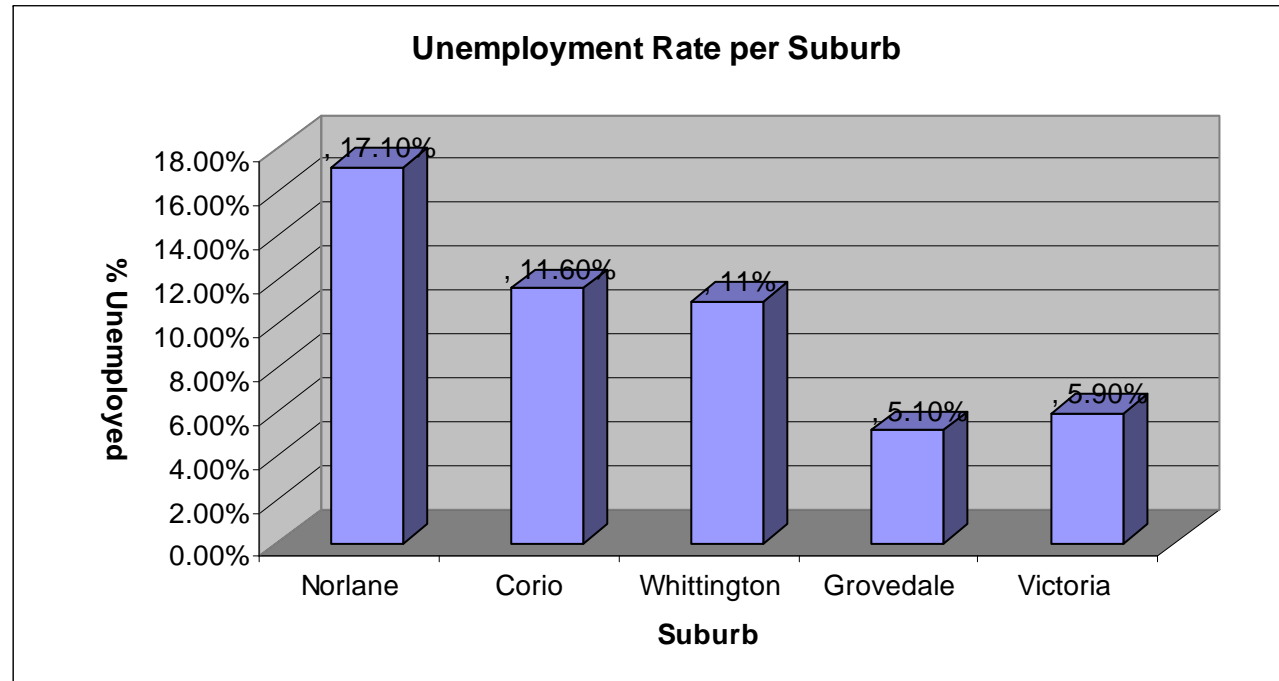**Unemployment Rate per Suburb**



Table 3: Unemployment Rates

Norlane, Corio and Whittington show a significantly higher unemployment rate than the State average.  Norlane is recorded as triple the State average while Corio and Whittington are double.

*Disability*

People with profound or severe disability are defined as needing "help or assistance in one or more areas of self care, mobility and communication because of a disability, long term health condition (6 months or longer) or old age." (ABS, 2006)

People with disabilities have a greater reliance on taxis or community transport because of accessible constraints.  Accessible transport although offered on some services is still one of the concerns raised by people with disabilities. The lack of transport adds financial pressures, reduces independence and increases the risk of social isolation.
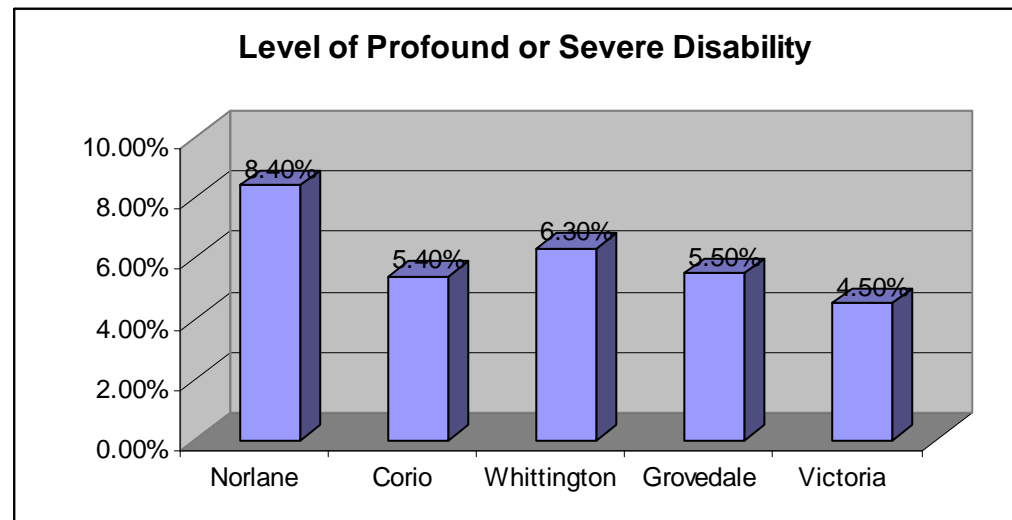


**Table 4: Level of Profound or Severe Diability**

Norlane shows a significantly higher level of profound or severe disability, almost double the State average.

## *Index of Relative Socio Economic Disadvantage*

The Socio-Economic Index for all Areas (SEIFA) is a report combining information from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. It explores different aspects of socio-economic conditions across every geographic area of Australia. The relative index of disadvantage summarises 17 different measures, and provides each suburb with a score.

The average score is 1000 and lower number reflect a high rate of disadvantage.

The index shows that Norlane (771), Corio (875) and Whittington (823) are significantly more disadvantaged than the Australian average and are ranked the lowest of all suburbs in the Barwon and surrounding regions.

## *Methods of Travel to Work (Australian Social Trends 2008)*



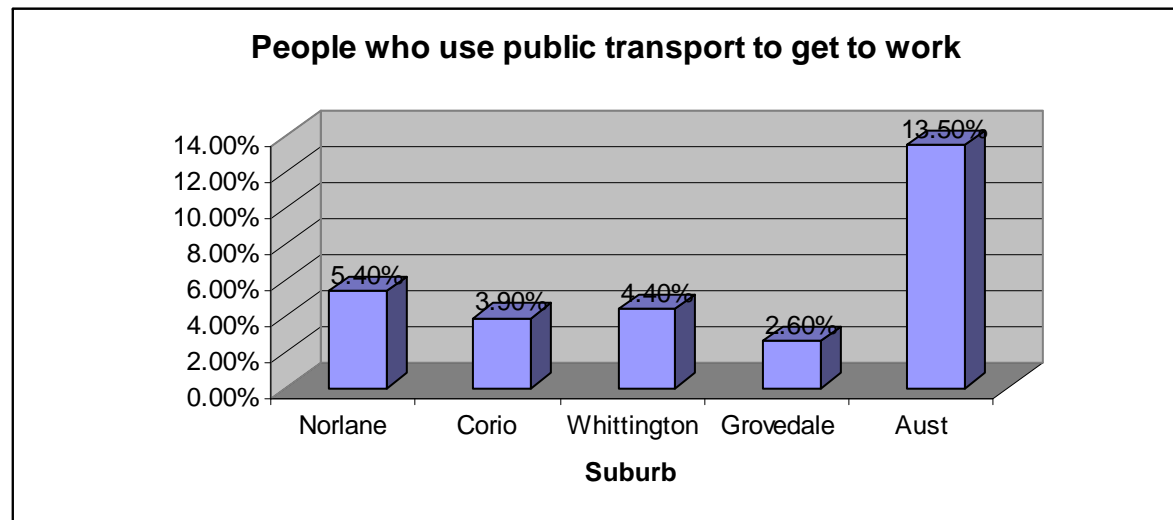**People who use public transport to get to work**

**Table 5: People who use pblic Transport**

An analysis of the methods of travel to work data, reported that 5% or less used public transport to get to work compared to the national average of 13.5%. With Geelong moving to a status of a major city, 95% of people using a private vehicle to get to work increases the pressure on roads, the environment, and other inner city infrastructure. Further, given the reliance on private motor vehicles in communities like Geelong, the lack of car ownership becomes even more critical.
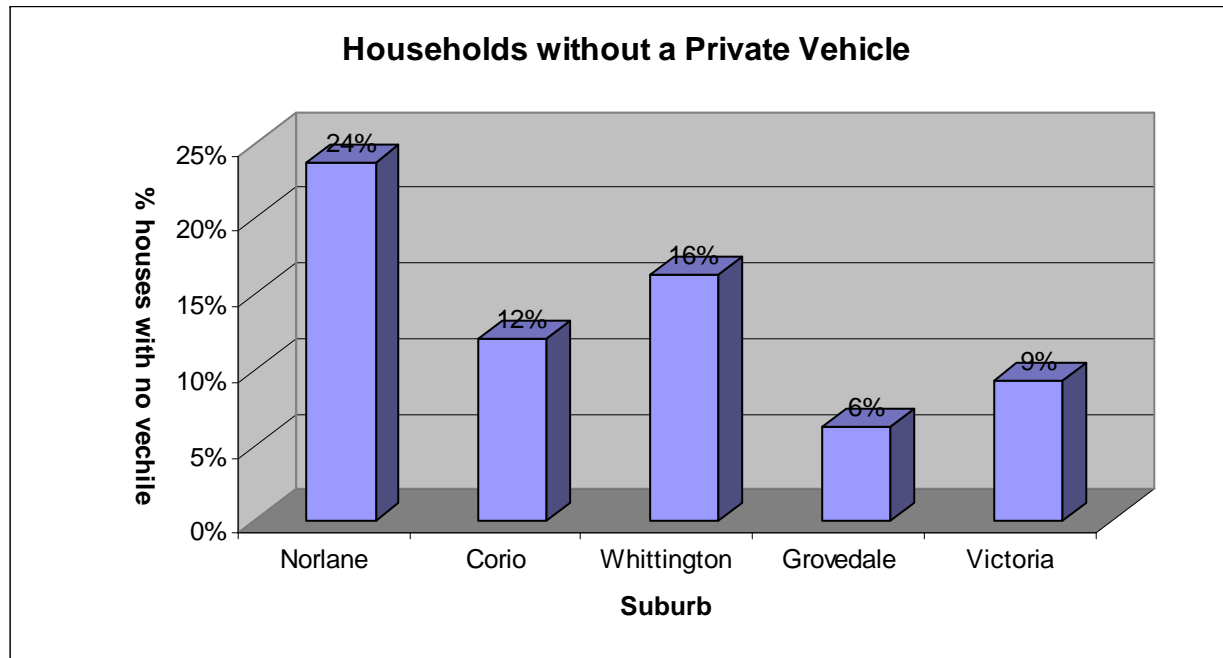
*Number of motor vehicles per dwelling*



**Households without a Private Vehicle**

% houses with no vechile

- 24% — Norlane
- 12% — Corio
- 16% — Whittington
- 6% — Grovedale
- 9% — Victoria

**Suburb**

**Table 6: Households withour a Private Vehicle**

One of the largest indicators of social disadvantage is the number of households that do not have a private vehicle.  Norlane is well above the State average of 9.3% with 24% of households without a private vehicle.  A number of factors including high unemployment, a high population of people with a disability or higher than average number of people above 65 years age may contribute to this result.  Considering the factors and the high number of households without a car, the risk of social isolation for a large part of the Norlane community is higher than the other areas in the State.

**8.2    Survey Feedback**

As part of the research an internet based survey was conducted of local agencies and support services whose clients would mostly benefit from a Transport Connections application. The survey was completed by support agencies and the professionals within these agencies, rather than individuals. They were questioned about how they believed public transport serviced their client group.

The agencies approached were from a cross section of various support services of clients that were likely to be transport disadvantaged or isolated in their community.  In total 38 survey responses were gathered.
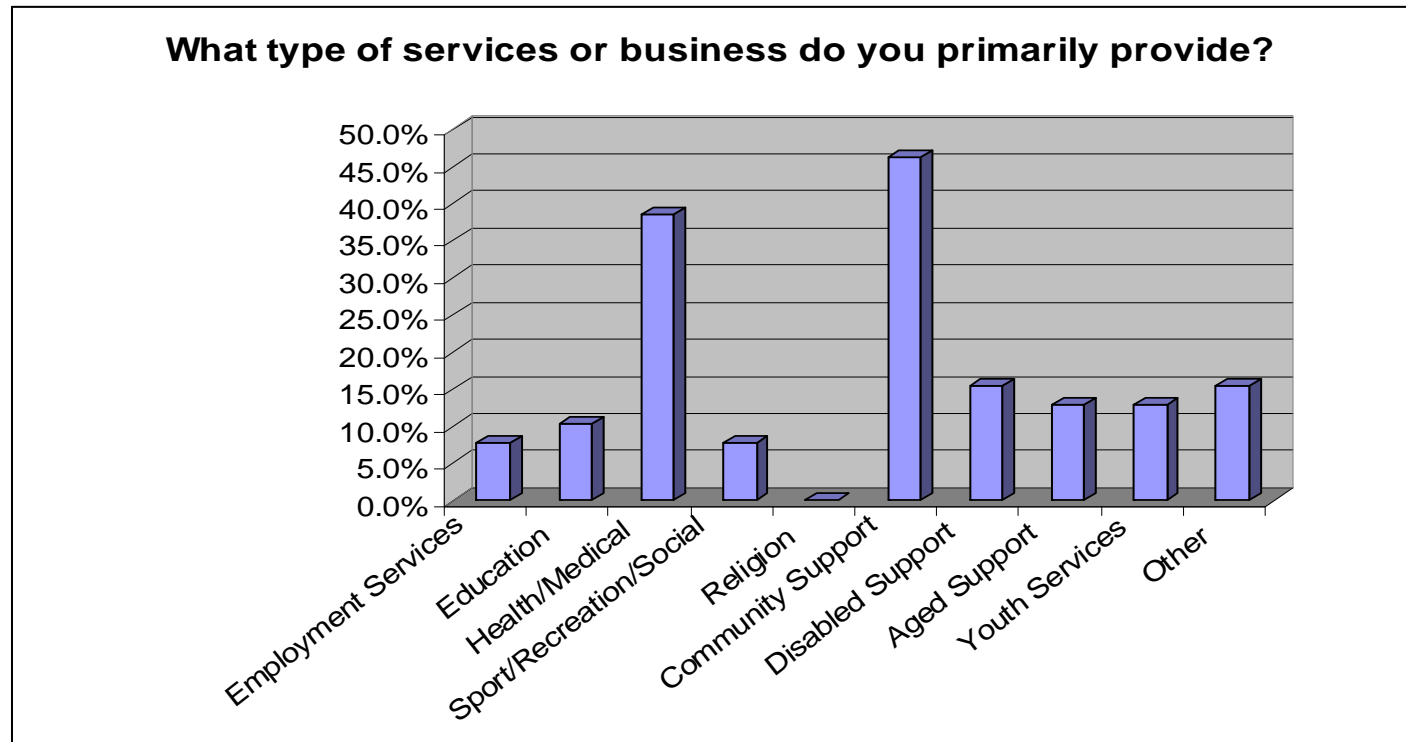


**Table 7: Types of services provided**

**Who normally accesses these services?**

Disabled    Aged    Youth    Disadvantaged    General community    Other

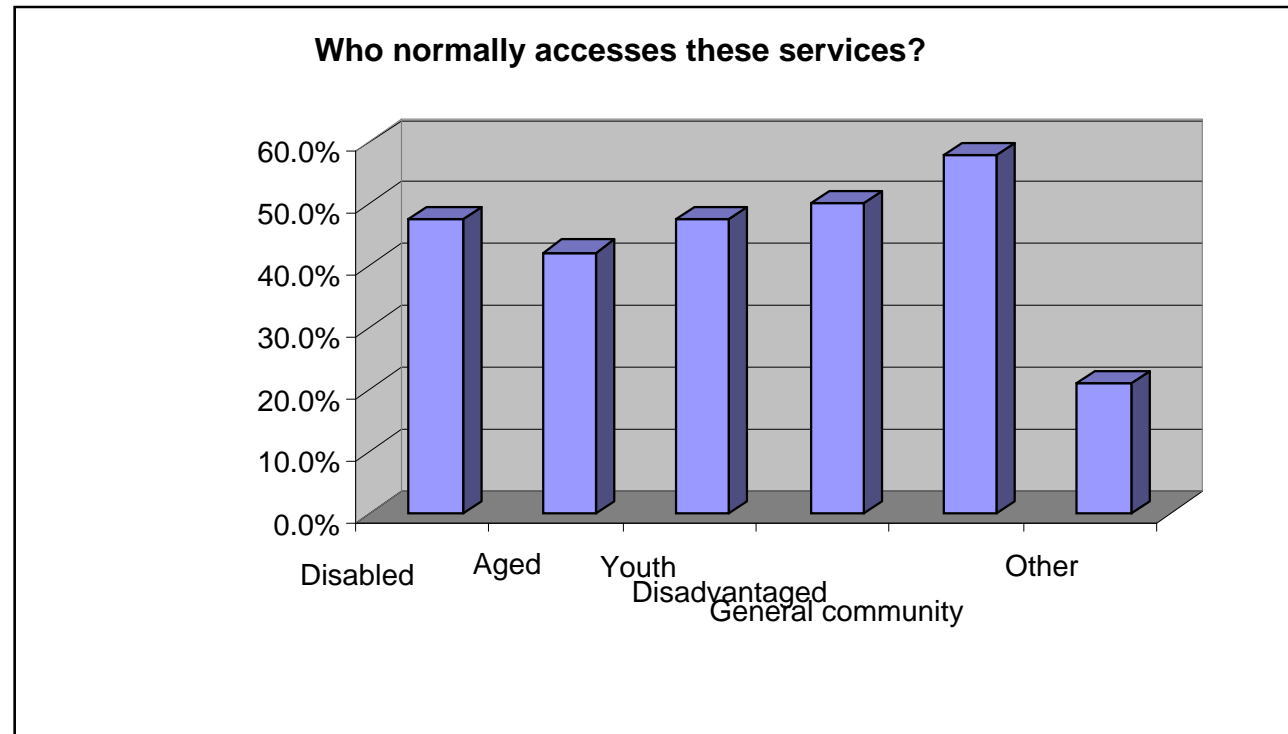**Table 8 – Client group that access services**

Of the 38 agencies, numerous had services ranging across multiple sectors and client groups, with the majority being represented by health/medical and community support. Agencies delivering services in Norlane and Corio (3214 postcode) and Whittington (3219 postcode) were targeted, but most agencies deliver service across all of Geelong and surrounding areas.
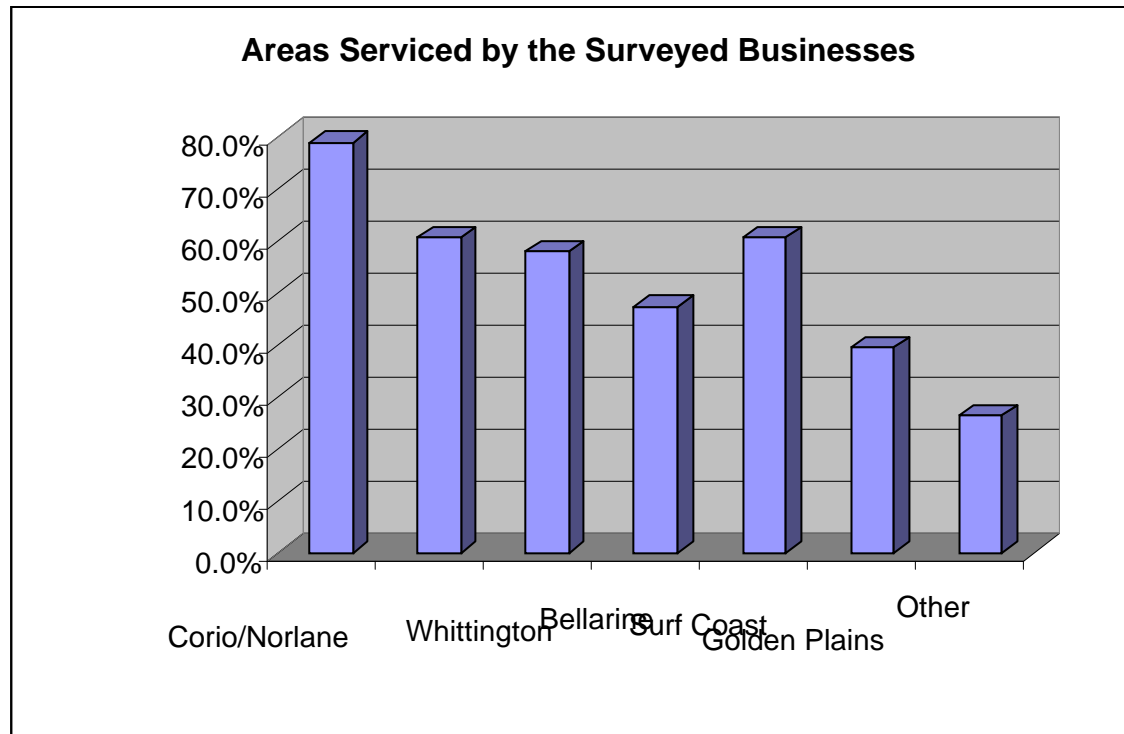
**Areas Serviced by the Surveyed Businesses**



**Table 9: Areas Serviced**

Agencies were asked which suburbs experience transport difficulties for clients when accessing their service. 55% of agencies indicated that clients from postcode 3214 were experiencing difficulties.  Bellarine, Surf Coast and Golden Plains also showed similar results.  These areas already have existing Transport Connection Coordinators in place.

Clients accessing the surveyed agencies clearly used a private vehicle as the most common form of transport, followed by bus and then taxi.  Trains were rarely used to access agencies.  Some general  comments about the gaps were:

"*no early morning transport to get workers to their job*"

"*Disabled and aged are limited to taxis which can be expensive and not ideal for short trips*"

"*Accessing the city is relatively easy but any other options involving connections is impossible for clients to negotiate*"

In relation to the clients that access their service, agencies were asked to rate the current transport options available from 1 (poor) to 10 (exceptional) and whether transport options limited clients attendance.
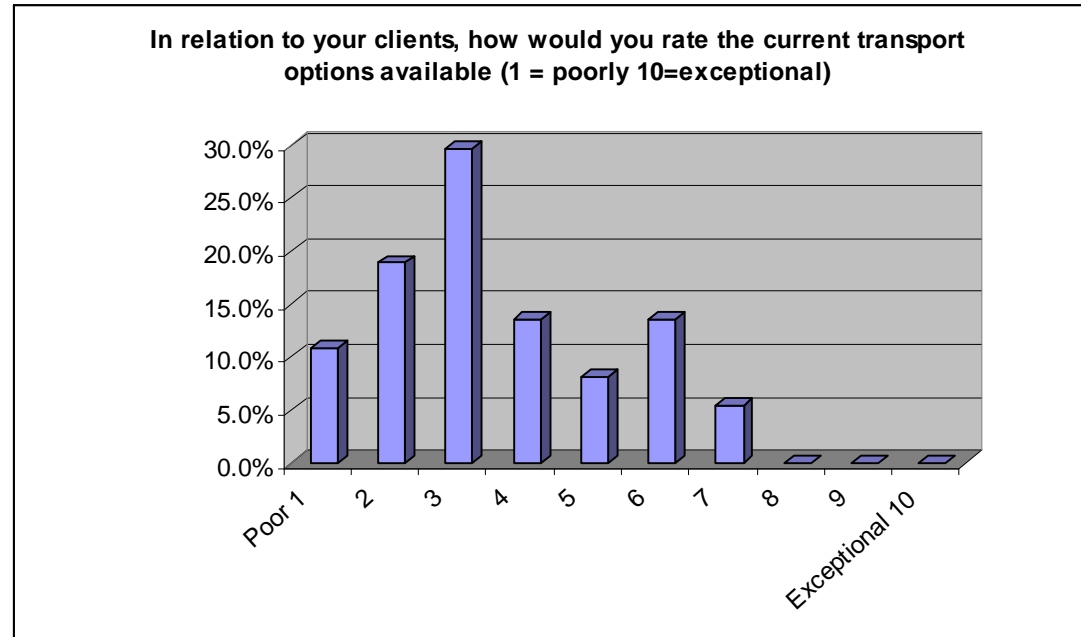
**In relation to your clients, how would you rate the current transport options available (1 = poorly 10=exceptional)**

**Table 10  - Rating of current transport options**

**Do the current transport options stop or limit people engaging with your services?**

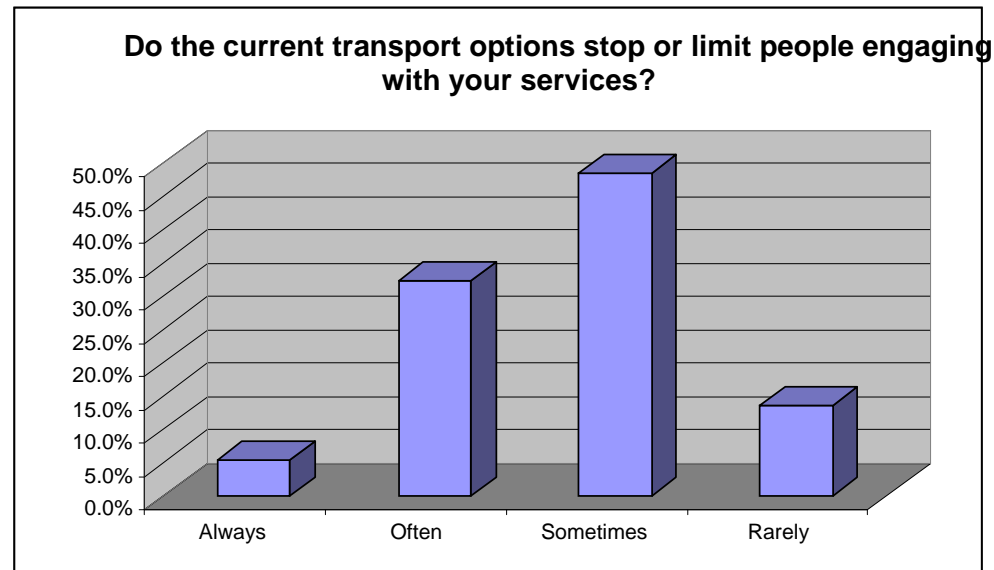| | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Table 11: Transport options limiting engagement with services**

When asked about some solutions, agencies stated:

*"Shopping trips to supermarkets or community markets with pick up and drop off from home"*

*"bigger print bus time tables"*

*"transport that can be booked to take clients to doctor appointments"*

*"Investigate the feasibility of increased early morning public transport servicing North Shore and Moolap"*

*"volunteer drivers for wheelchair access vehicles".*

*"More frequent services - cheaper fares".*

*"There may be community vehicles that are under utilised. In an ideal world there would be support staff on public transport to assist people with disabilities and the aged".*

## 9   Auspicing Agency Selection

As the Project Team understood progressively more about Community Transport and in particular it's strong community engagement and service delivery model, the Syndicate Group determined that the City of Greater Geelong (COGG) would be their preferred option as the Auspicing Agency.

Factors that influenced this thinking included that the City of Greater Geelong:

- has a strategic capability in terms of addressing a broad issue across the local Community (e.g. Graffiti)

- has a strong Community Development and Community Renewal focus (e.g. Armstrong Creek, Norlane Neighbourhood Renewal program)

- is an enabler for Community Organisations. COGG performs the role of Facilitator to share / partner on ideas for those common needs (e.g. Neighbourhood houses, Electronic Community Directory on the website)

- is directly involved in Social Planning for Community Facilities

- has exposure to the current round of Transport Connections projects as COGG are the Auspicing Agency for the Building Bellarine Connections project. They are also involved in other transport related projects (e.g. North Shore Station – The Toot Toot project).

The City of Greater Geelong is committed to meeting the expectations and needs of the community. Auspicing a Transport Connections Program would allow COGG to continue to strengthen the community through the provision of enhanced services which will further promote community inclusiveness.

The City currently offers a range of community transport services which are funded from within Council and other State Government Agencies. A Transport Connections Program would provide a framework for consolidating these initiatives into a single department, which will assist these services with ongoing coordination and sustainability. Examples of the current services offered include :

- The NightBus, a trial bus service that operates from the city's nightclubs to Geelong, Bellarine and Surfcoast suburbs on Sunday mornings from 1:30am till 4am.  The cost is $5 per person.  The trial is seeking sponsorship dollars to continue the service, and unlike other Night Bus services across the state, this project has operated with a security guard.

- The Free Shuttle bus in Ocean Grove / Barwon Heads, which has operated for a number of years in the summer peak period (27 December to 26 January).  The shuttle is operated by the City of Greater Geelong, funded through Council and a

number of sponsors, including Coles Supermarkets. This bus service primarily services the caravan parks to provide access to the shopping centres in Ocean Grove, but has also provided an option to the local residents for movement to the beach and shops. The service is run via a timetable and bus stops. Approximately 5000 trips were made in the recent summer period.

- Ten existing community buses which provide affordable transport for community groups with costs subsidised by the COGG. Priority is given to applicants that are disadvantaged geographically, physically, socially or economically.

Within the Geelong Region, there are a number of other community based organisations that provide transport services to disabled and frail clients. However, the services that can be provided are limited and do not cover the broader community or the full needs of the clients.

Phase Three of a Transport Connections Program involvement for the City of Greater Geelong will also incorporate a continued commitment to the Building Bellarine Connections project, subject to the request for an extension of the project being approved by DPCD.

## 10  Research of other Community Transport Programs

The objective of this research is to understand how Community Transport Programs operate in different locations and what can be learnt from those projects, in terms of determining those groups that are transport disadvantaged as well as the identification of innovative transport solutions. This Research should provide a toolkit of ideas and be a useful reference point for the Transport Connections Coordinator facilitating a Transport Connections Program in the City of Greater Geelong.

The Research areas included other Community Transport activities in the G21 Region, a Transport Connections Program in Wyndham, a Community Transport Project in the Newcastle / Hunter Region as well as a brief study of overseas Community Transport initiatives.

### 10.1  Neighbouring Regional Projects

The local Transport Connections Projects that were reviewed as a part of this Research were the Linking Communities in the West, Golden Connections Project, Bringing Communities Together and Building Bellarine Connections.

**Figure 3: Transport Connections Programs**

### 10.1.1  Golden Connections – Golden Plains Shire

#### 10.1.1.1    The Demographic Challenge

The Transport Connections Project in Golden Plains Shire is named the Golden Connections Project.  The demographic challenges include; an aging population, very limited public transport network, small communities 'isolated' from health and social interactions and a significant population which cannot access services by non motorized transport.

The Golden Connections Project aims to address the transport needs of the Golden Plains Shire, which is one of the most significant barriers to accessing services, employment, recreation and social networks.  The methods in which these goals are being addressed are:

- To work with local communities and other strategic partners to improve transport services across the Shire and to make better use of available transport resources,
- To increase community awareness of available transport services,
- To increase participation in walking and cycling, made possible by improving paths and trails infrastructure network across Golden Plains Shire, and;
- To improve provision and extend the catchment of community transport services in Golden Plains Shire and surrounding communities.
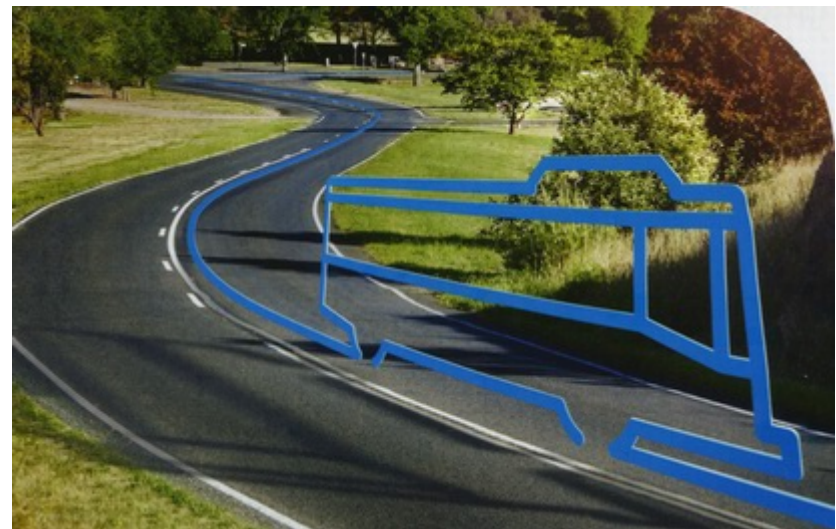
**10.1.1.2    Projects**

*The Wiggly Bus*

The Community Transport service developed in the northern townships of Golden Plains Shire has been dubbed the Wiggly Bus, due to the method in which the route has developed from the initial identification of the need within the small townships to attend medical appointments in Ballarat.  The service provides a demand responsive transport solution for shopping and medical needs.

The service also provides an important social interaction, and it is noted that users of the service requested extra time be provided in Ballarat to have lunch together before heading back home.

The advantage in providing this type of transport is that it allows the 'catchment' of potential users to be expanded, as the route has been able to morph and 'wiggle' from the residents to the services provided in Ballarat. This service also provides an indication of the demand for public transport in a region, and in this particular case has assisted in proving the need for a Trial Public Bus service from the Northern Townships of the Shire into Ballarat.

*Trial Bus Services*

A number of trial bus services have been identified through a transport survey undertaken by the Golden Connections Program. Three services have been developed, including;

- A Rokewood to Ballarat service, which runs 2 days a week and stops at the Rokewood Health Centre, Dereel Community Centre, Enfield Hotel, Enfield Community Hall, Napoleons Community Centre, Ross Creek Shop, Lydiard Street Train Station, Ballarat City Center and the Stocklands Plaza in Wendouree.
- A Bannockburn Loop service, which provides a connection between the neighbouring townships of Inverleigh, Teesdale and Shelford to the Bannockburn V-line Bus Service to Geelong.
- A Bannockburn to Geelong service, which runs on weekdays and also provides a connection to the townships along the Midland Highway.

All of the trial projects are funded by the Department of Transport, based on the community response to the concept of the bus routes.

The success however, in terms of patronage of the Bannockburn Services, has been limited and much less than the potential identified in the community consultation processes. Currently, each day one person on average is using the Bannockburn loop service and five people on average are using the Bannockburn to Geelong service.

The potential reasons for the lower than expected patronage, based on survey work undertaken, were the times of operation are not suiting the potential passengers and the destinations for the people who are wishing to use these services are not connected appropriately.

The Department of Transport has identified that changes to the service route and the times of operation are required to provide better connections to the Geelong hospitals.

The ability for these types of services to be delivered either by a door to door service or a demand responsive service (Wiggly Bus) may have been able to adapt to the community needs faster and provide a transport option for the wider community earlier.

*Lessons from Golden Plains*

One of the key lessons from the review of the Golden Plains Transport Connection Program is that the demand for transport identified in surveys does not always result in patronage following the installation of a Public Transport style system. The trial bus routes developed are unable to meet the needs of the target market.

The use of demand responsive services or door to door services enables a wider audience to use the service and is able to respond immediately to changing demands in the community.

## 10.1.2  Bringing Communities Together – Surfcoast Shire and Colac Otway Shire

### 10.1.2.1 The Demographic Challenge

The Transport Connections Project developed by the Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire was developed with the aim of tying the small communities throughout the municipalities together with the larger towns to improve access to health, social and employment opportunities. Similar to Golden Connections, the demographic challenges include an aging population, very limited public transport network, small communities 'isolated' from health and social interactions and a significant population which cannot access services by non motorized transport. In additon however, the coastal communities within the Bringing Communities Together program experience a substantial peak summer holiday influx of visitors, which creates further gaps in the transport and social services demands of the community.

### 10.1.2.2 Projects

*The Colac to Lorne Seasonal Bus*

The Colac-Lorne seasonal bus was initiated following a number of transport forums, with both long term and short term residents identifying that access to employment for the youth, access to the beach for families and connectivity for townships between Colac and Lorne were lacking, particularly in the summer months. The development of the Colac-Lorne summer bus has provided affordable travel between Colac, Birregurra, Deans Marsh and Lorne. The service runs five times a day during summer, and can provide a connecting trip to V/line coaches along the coast or the V/line train from Colac. The Department of Transport support this project through funding of the route, and given the success in the number of patrons using the service, the funding for this bus route will continue on into the future.

### *The Colac to Apollo Bay Bus*

The Colac-Apollo Bay bus runs between the towns of Colac and Apollo Bay, but also stops in the towns of Forrest and Barwon Downs. The service runs once a week, on Wednesday, to provide access to health, recreational, retail and medical specialists that are provided in the neighbouring towns. Again, the bus route is timed to connect to V/line bus and train services.

Both the Colac to Lorne and Colac to Apollo Bay routes are now fully funded by the Department of Transport. These services have been implemented due to the demonstration of the need to provide these services, completed by the Transport Connections program.

### *The Lorne Community Bus*



**Contributed by Lorne Community Hospital**

The Lorne Community Hospital is the proud custodian of a new community bus! The purchase was jointly funded by the local Lorne Opp Shop, Lions Club and Senior Citizen groups.

Transport is a significant issue for people in the community who are unable to drive so the bus is an important resource. The new bus meets contemporary standards for airbag protection of passengers in an accident, disabled access via a hoist, and health & safety for staff.

The bus is used to offer an active program of planned community based activities and outings for elderly people who are in aged care, or living at home but have difficulty accessing transport. Outings improve the quality of life for elderly people by enabling them to get out in the community to socialize, attend appointments, or to simply appreciate the local scenery.

The Hospital has a policy of encouraging other community groups to access to the bus if it will aid with community support, social and health related activities, and improve the safety of those in need.

### 10.1.3  Building Bellarine Connections City of Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliffe

### 10.1.3.1 The Demographic Challenge

The Building Bellarine Connections Program was developed to focus on the transport needs of the townships on the Bellarine Peninsula, for which a public transport system and taxi system provided coverage by space and time to connect residents to social and community services that are spread throughout all the townships.

Due to the community services not being able to be provided in every town, residents have to travel in motorized vehicles to access the services.

The significant challenge that the Building Bellarine Connections program aims to meet is the high proportion of aging residents in the small coastal communities, whose level of mobility is reducing and the demand for health and social interactions are increasing.

Also typical in the coastal communities are the lack of connected footpaths, which reduces the ability of mobility impaired residents to move within their community, and increases the pressure on the need to provide for door to door transport solutions.

### 10.1.3.2 Projects

The area that the Building Bellarine Connections program covers is primarily the townships on the Bellarine Peninsula, including Leopold and Ocean Grove, which are locations that traditionally have limited public transport service frequency and coverage. The following projects were presented to the research group by Mr Peter Hibbert, the Transport Connections Coordinator for the 'Building Bellarine Connections' Transport Connections Project.  All projects have been based on a significant amount of research and justification, achieved and delivered through a Steering Committee including amongst others, the aucpicing agencies of City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliffe and Bellarine Health, the Public Transport Operators and community group representatives.

#### *Leopold Township Service*

A weekly community bus started operating as a trial in Leopold in August 2009 as a way of connecting mobility impaired residents in Leopold directly to the new Gateway Plaza, connections to the Public Bus System and other local community hubs.

The service has been developed through the use of the City of Greater Geelong Community Buses and the development of a volunteer driver training program.  The ability to develop skills of volunteer drivers and using the community buses has been critical in being able to provide a regular service that has a low level of external funding.

> *Volunteer driver, Barb Dwyer, said she had received "really great feedback" from her passengers, who had limited mobility and would otherwise not leave their homes, or wait for friends or relatives to drive them somewhere.*
>
> *"I call them each week to check they will be on the bus, provide a door-to-door service and help carry their shopping," Dwyer said.*
>
> *"They're not relying so heavily on friends and family and they are getting out; it's giving them something to look forward to.*
>
> *"There is no charge but some like to make a gold coin donation towards the fuel costs.*
>
> *"But we do need more volunteer drivers and every driver completes a refresher course with a qualified driving instructor."*
>
> (Surfcoast Times, 2010)

It is likely that a number of other townships such as Portarlington will also have a similar service, based on the success of the Leopold service.  These services are typical of a Community Transport "door-to-door" service.

### *Promotion and justification of additional Bus Routes*

One of the key aims of the Building Bellarine Transport Connections Project was to enhance and promote the existing Public Bus Route services on the Bellarine Peninsula.  Through community engagement and surveys, two new Public Bus routes have been developed and subsequently funded by the Department of Transport.  These routes include the Portarlington to Queenscliff Service and the Queenscliff to Torquay Service.

## Trial bus service to improve accessibility and provide a range of community benefits for residents

A NEW bus service linking the Bellarine and Surf Coast is set to be trialled this summer.

The service from Queenscliff to Torquay - stopping at Point Lonsdale, Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads - has been developed by the Building Bellarine Connection (BBC), a state-funded initiative supported by City of Greater Geelong, Bellarine Peninsula Community Health Centre and Borough of Queenscliffe.

BBC co-ordinator, Peter Hibbert, said the new bus service would operate from December 19 to January 13, but could continue permanently if the public supported it and proved its viability.

"It's like any service; use it or lose it," he said.

Hibbert said the BBC had been contacted earlier this year by Bellarine Secondary College student and Ocean Grove resident Nina Hamilton-Grady, who identified the need for a service between Ocean Grove and Torquay.

Hibbert said many young Bellarine people had friends in Torquay or other towns but had no option but to rely on parents for transport.

He said there was also demand for transport to Torquay's surf beaches and bus users would be able to take surfboards on the new service.

"Nina had carried out a survey of 160 people as part of a school project and learned that young people wanted access to the surf beaches and others wanted to be able to shop in other towns," Hibbert said.

"By extending the service from Torquay right through to Queenscliff, ferry travellers will be able to use the bus and it will address parking issues in Torquay over summer.

"It's only a trial but I am very confident that the service will be a success and it will continue".

(Martin, 2010)

### Transport Support for Major Events

Traditionally, events that draw large crowds to the Bellarine Peninsula have had limited support from the Event Organiser to invest in providing public transport to the Event, and therefore have a strong reliance on attendees driving their vehicle. This also limits people with transport disadvantage to attend and be involved in these celebrations and events such as the Portarlington Mussel Festival.

The Building Bellarine Connections program has been able to develop a relationship with the event organisors that has enabled a sponsorship driven community transport service. The bus service to the community is provided free of charge by the event organisor, who in turn receives transport services for the event to operate.

### *Volunteer Bus Driver System*

One of the fantastic projects that the Building Bellarine Connections program has developed is the creation of a volunteer driver system to assist in providing the door to door service that has made the Building Bellarine Connections so successful. The program has focused on advertising for drivers and providing training and insurance for those that wish to volunteer.

Drivers have been sought from within their local community, and the commitments range from regular weekly service provision to a needs basis. Drivers were able to be engaged through word of mouth and newspaper articles.

Having a network of volunteer drivers has also made it easier to respond to an emerging community transport need with a door to door or demand responsive transport service. The key to a good community transport model often relies on volunteer drivers.

## 10.1.4 Linking Communities in the West – Wyndham City Council

### 10.1.4.1 The Demographic Challenge

Wyndham is the fastest growing municipality in Victoria with around a 7% annual growth rate and a current population of approximately 144,000 residents. This rapid growth rate has brought about a number of challenges for the municipality, in terms of the delivery of essential services including roads, schools, parks, community centres, shopping centres and of course connected transport networks.

By 2026, it is expected that the City of Wyndham will support 277,000 residents.

With this extreme growth rate comes a number of transport demographic related challenges including:

- The number of residents 60+ is set to double over the next ten years. The most significant increase in the 60+ age cohort is seen in Truganina which is forecast to have a substantial 603 per cent increase!
- Wyndham has a significant proportion of young people, estimated at 37 per cent of the total population.
- Wyndham residents under the age of 19 years is 31 per cent
- Wyndham will require an additional 11 multi-purpose community facilities and 29 active open space reserves over the next 10 years.
- Following the review of the Urban Growth Boundary, Wyndham is predicted to have an ultimate population of 430,000. (City of Wyndham, 2010)

With the growth rate in the younger and older age groups in the municipality, typically identified as transport disadvantaged, the demand from the community to provide an advanced level of transport in the residential growth corridors and the industrial employment area of Laverton North was strong.

Wyndham City Council has developed a series of Transport Connections projects that have resulted from an understanding of the availability and demands of the transport system for the particular section of the community that are transport disadvantaged.

The program has been operational for the last three years and was funded in part from the initial $18.3 million commitment announced in A Fairer Victoria Social Policy Action Plan 2006. Other commitments from the City of Wyndham and commercial agencies have made the development of programs possible and to some extent, sustainable.

**10.1.4.2 Transport Connections Projects**

The area that the Wyndham City Council Transport Connections program covers is primarily the new urban growth corridors of Point Cook and Tarneit, the aging population of Truganina and also in the industrial areas of Laverton North where public transport is traditionally limited by frequency and service coverage. The following projects were presented to the research group by Mr John Huta, the Transport Connections Coordinator for the Wyndham 'Linking Communities in the West' Transport Connections Project.

### *WynCabs Shared Transport Service*

The WYNCabs shared transport service is provided to Wyndham residents who are unable to access private or public transport, and provides its users with a safe and inexpensive opportunity to access local services and importantly, for social connection. The project is aimed at assisting people retain their independence and remain much longer in their homes and be active in their community.

To deliver the project, Wyndham City Council, through the Transport Connections Coordinator, formed a partnership with Black Cabs Combined Pty Ltd (13CABS), which was able to provide a streamlined booking system for members of the WYNCabs project. This partnership was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to define the roles, responsibilities and costs to both parties.

WYNCabs provides a service to residents who are:

- Over the age of 60, and/or
- Have a mobility challenge, and/or
- Hold a pension concession card, and,
- Live in Truganina or Tarneit. (Wyndham City Council, Undated)

The service has been limited to providing a connection from residents homes to the Sub Regional centre of Werribee Plaza, and operates on a Tuesday and a Thursday for the cost of $2 per person per trip. To date the project has a membership of approximately 40 residents and has a costing to the transport connections program of approximately $800 - $1000 a month (Huta, 2010).

The strengths of the WYNCabs Project are:

- Provides a demand responsive pre-booked, affordable, reliable and accessible service using a maxi taxi in a shared transport arrangement;
- Capacity of the service is predetermined through pre-booking;
- Door to door assist;
- Passengers are able to book and arrange transport independently with a Service User Number;
- Marketing is provided with the assistance and support of the Project Partner 13Cabs;
- The shared transport arrangement, through the passenger contribution, has the ability to provide greater benefits to the Transport Connections Program overall.

The WYNCabs service is currently being considered for expansion to other key community nodes that may have a low level of public transport service.

## WYNTrans Public Transport Information

One of the greatest barriers to individuals choosing to use public transport is the lack of service information either gained or accessible to the individual. Information is critical for people to be assured and confident in identifying all available transport services, and knowledge of the available concessions, benefits and options will better enable full participation in all activities the community has to offer.

This is the basis of the development of the WYNTrans Information Displays, a 'one stop shop' that is able to distribute the above information specifically to the Wyndham community through the use of printed brochures. Brochures are sourced from the local transport operators, including rail operators, bus operators and taxi operators. Information relating to the Transport Connections Projects is also provided.

Approximately 20 sites have been located throughout the municipality, and are provided in locations that can target information for older residents, such as in medical centres, libraries and community centres.

Brochures developed by the Transport Connections Coordinator provide information and contact details of the available services provided for people with a disability on the Public Transport System. Services such as the Companion Card, Travellers Aid, Disability Parking Permits and the National Public Toilet Map are all highlighted.

Empowering people with this knowledge begins to break down some of the barriers that inhibit people with disabilities from using the Public Transport Network to its full capability.

## *WYNTrans Newsletters*

Newsletters have been developed by the Transport Connections Coordinator to provide the residents of the Wyndham municipality information and updates of the changes to the Public Transport Network.

Information in these newsletters provides residents with a method of keeping abreast of the latest opportunities to maximize the potential of the Public Transport Network, including:

- Information on the roll out of new bus services in the urban growth corridors, which is critical given the usually limited and complex existing routes;
- Updates of train station facilities, including the availability of car parking, availability of 'Parkiteer' bike cages and access requirements;
- Provides a method of feedback, which improves the advocacy ability of residents for their desired Public Transport Network;
- Cross-connects the community with other sources of related information developed around mobility and community infrastructure;
- Information on the services the Transport Connections Project provides; and
- Interesting facts, including travel time comparisons of different modes of transport.

## *Future Visions and Opportunities in Wyndham*

The Wyndham City Council Transport Connections project coordinator provided the research group with a number of initiatives and potential trials that, given the demographic research undertaken to date, may prove to be successful in targeting transport solutions for people experiencing transport disadvantage. These services could include (Huta, 2010):

- Development of an incentive driven car pooling system, with an aim to provide employees and businesses with funding for extra distance travelled to pick up young people and new starters who do not have access to a vehicle or work in a location that does not provide for appropriate public transport. The service will be targeted at businesses in the manufacturing and industrial areas, which typically do not have public transport services that provide sufficient connections for employees.
- Development of a share bus system, which allows sporting clubs and other associations to hire a bus at a reduced rate to allow attendance at 'away' events. It is expected that this will be of most benefit to small sporting clubs and community centers.

- Development of a trail bike riding transport service, providing transport to young residents who wish to ride an off road motorbike (legally).  Through a sponsored program, a trailer for motorbikes and a vehicle could transport young residents to a formal motorbike track.  This program would also provide significant road safety benefits, removing illegal riding of motorbikes in parkland and reducing casualty crashes on the road network.
- Investigate the potential to offer connections to services outside the municipal boundaries.  The example provided related to the current demand on health services in Wyndham, and the need to 'outsource' medical treatment.  Geelong will be one of those key locations and a partnership with a hospital to provide non ambulance transfers could be an option.

### *Project Opportunities for the Geelong Region*

The Wyndham City Council has very similar demographics to the northern Geelong Suburbs, in both the level of public transport serviceability, age and disadvantage breakdown and a focus on manufacturing and industry based employment. Based on this, some of the experiences and projects that would provide benefits to the Geelong area include:

- Formalisation of a Public Transport information project, which could provide information through a number of possible channels, including the form of a newsletter such as WYNTrans or through the use of the printed media.  It is expected that this could be managed through possible partners such as the Public Transport Users Association – Geelong Branch.
- Development of a cab share system, which would be applicable to the suburbs with an aging population including Norlane and North Shore, where there are limited bus services (prior to the roll out of Stage 2 of the Geelong Bus improvements) that connect residents to community centers, the Corio Shopping centre and other transport nodes (such as the train station).
- Development of a cost neutral incentive driven car pooling system, which would provide businesses in the industrial areas of Heales Road, Avalon Airport, the Freight Intermodal Centre and the Armstrong Creek industrial precinct an opportunity to coordinate a car pooling system for new and young employees that are transport disadvantaged, and could be extended to all employees to assist in the aim of increasing car pooling in the new Armstrong Creek Industrial precinct plan.

## 10.2  Interstate – Newcastle / Hunter Region

It was decided to research the Newcastle / Hunter Region as it has a number of similar demographic traits as the G21 Region.  It has a large major City in the Region, a strong Industrial footprint as well as a large rural base.

### 10.2.1  Background

The Federal and State Government provide funding for the Home and Community Care (HACC) program. The HACC program provides funding for services such as Meals On Wheels, Day Care Centres, Linen services, Home Mods and Maintenance, Information services, Monitoring services, Domestic Assistance, Personal Care, Respite, Community Transport and Social Support services. Therefore there is a recurrent stream of funding for some community transport to assist the frail aged, people

with a disability and their carers. There are approximately 134 Community Transport providers around the state; some are auspiced by local councils whilst others are purely community groups. One service may just focus on Community Transport while the adjoining Local Government area may have a Community Transport provider that also delivers a number of other HACC services.

Within NSW, there is also a Community Transport Program (CTP) that is 100% funded by the State Government. The focus of this Program is to assist people who are transport disadvantaged to get better access to the community. However this funding is not distributed evenly across the state to everyone of the 134 Community Transport providers. For example in the Hunter Region, Newcastle does not get any Community Transport funding, yet the adjoining areas of Maitland, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens and Cessnock has access to some Program Funding. Although these amounts are relatively small, it can be very beneficial to the Community, especially in locations where there are not many other transport alternatives. Community Transport providers often use their HACC funded resources to assist people who are transport disadvantaged, so for example there may be a HACC funded bus running from Cessnock (55kms from Newcastle) into Newcastle for HACC clients several days a week. People who are transport disadvantaged may be able to access a seat.  Community Transport groups are encouraged to make use of this spare capacity to provide an additional service to the Community for some additional revenue.

In summary, there are community groups and some councils providing community transport, looking for a range of funders to fund their operation and sometimes providing individual transport and/or group transport. In general, the Community Transport groups operate in their local government area (LGA), so there are opportunities for many of these organisations to improve their operations if they work more closely together or look at amalgamations to provide better returns of scale.

In the discussion papers for the Community Plan 2006 – 2010 in relation to Transport, it was documented that the Ministry of Transport had recruited a Regional Transport Coordinator to work towards better integration of local transport services as well as improved community transport. It was to provide the opportunity to look at how to utilise the existing vehicle and people resources more effectively and how legislation could be amended to support these changes.

A key overall objective of the role is to continue to work to reduce transport disadvantaged by designing services that operate at better times for the community or alters service routes. Trials may be funded to encourage existing operators to try something different to better suit the Community. The important thing from a NSW perspective is that the government has been making it more possible to deliver more flexible services for the community, encouraging the operator to talk with the public and plan better.

The key specific focus areas of the Regional Coordination role from a Community Transport perspective include to:

- improve coordination between existing Community Transport offerings;
- attempt to pool resources and scheduling across the region;
- develop a Brokerage service to develop partnerships and achieve outcomes;

- focus on inter LGA travel (i.e. a broader regional focus); and deliver a whole of Community / Regional response to one off events. For example, free transport (Bus / Ferry / Train) was made available across the Region for Homelessness Day, which 1500 people attended.

Community Transport is viewed as a component of the Transport services of the Region. The Lower Hunter Transport Guide, which is available for download from the Newcastle City Council website, and describes transport offerings in the Region includes Community Transport information as one of the regional transport options.

## 10.2.2 Project Examples

### Fare Free Zone

A Fare Free Zone has been established around central Newcastle. This Service is delivered by buying the spare capacity of existing buses on existing bus routes. This can be more economical than funding additional buses as other cities have done. There are a number of benefits including reducing the need for central parking, it is easier for the Community to travel around town and it provides a solution to support those in the Community who are Transport disadvantaged. There is evidence of people cycling to the outskirts of town and then using the fare free zone buses.

### Additional Services for a Community with limited Transport Options

Fifteen bus services were in operation between two towns via a main road.  A Dept of Housing estate was part way along this road but two kilometres from the actual main road.  A Loop Service was established on a 3 day / week basis to provide a transport option for this Community. The service was scheduled to operate in school hours, thus enabling the use of existing transport resources.  A Gold coin donation is required. The equivalent taxi fare would cost approximately $14. This service is still in operation some four years later and has delivered benefits to a community through improved utilisation of existing resources.

### Extension of existing bus service

A service ran from an indigenous community to a specific town on a five day per week basis.  People in this community were working in the town and were limited in their work options as they could not travel to the town on a Saturday. Funds were sourced to trial the extension of the service to include a Saturday travel option.

### Nightlink - Late Night Transport Model – Central Newcastle

A Central Rank was established in Newcastle. At this rank:

- a Bulk hire Maxi taxi service was established that allow up to 10 people at a time to travel within an 8 km zone of the Rank for a $5 flat fee.

- a Standard Taxi Service was available

- Information was made available regarding the next Public Transport service (e.g. Train)

- Food / Water were available

- Security was present

A Free bus was established between 19 late night venues that also stopped at the Central Rank. This bus was partially funded by the Late night Venue operators.

After a two year trial, funding ran out for this program. Venue Operators declined to take up the management of this project or contribute to ongoing funding. Nightlink was not a Community Transport program, but it did provide a Social and Recreational benefit to the Community.

### Dial a Ride (Example from a local Community Transport Service in Maitland)

In Maitland, a town of 60,000 people, an on demand transport solution has been established.  During standard office hours, the buses run fixed routes, however after hours and on weekends, the public can dial a number and ask to be picked up and taken to a specific destination. It is effectively a flexi timetable and operates within a 10 km radius of the town. Fares are the same as the standard fare. This type of service can deliver a range of benefits for the community. For example, parents can drop their children in town and arrange for their children to catch the bus home.

The bus company avoids having empty buses circulating the streets. They have also used smaller buses for this service, which are more popular with the public, but are not preferred by the bus operator due to operational issues.

Whilst this service reads as a creative, innovative solution, it is not well patronised. For these types of services, ongoing marketing to the community is key.

### Lessons Learnt

Transport needs to be one of the key considerations in the early stages of any community services planning, but particularly in Regional areas.

There are benefits in having a regional focus to community transport to further improve the service offerings in regional communities. It provides an avenue for achieving broader agendas and can achieve greater efficiencies and economies of scale than a more localised approach. Seed funding for initiatives and service changes can assist operators better adapt to community

needs. Partnerships can often better attract funding for initiatives. Sometimes development work is required to establish the partnerships and for partners to see the benefit for them in being involved.

## 10.3  International – UK Experiences

Throughout the review of the current transport connections program, a number of interviewees identified that the United Kingdom has a very strong community transport program.  The research group contacted and interviewed Clare Cowdery, a former employee of Department of Transport and considered to be an expert in Community Transport in the UK.

Community transport in the UK is strong, particularly in communities of medium to low density, like the outer suburbs of Melbourne, Geelong and their satellite cities.  To understand why there are so many community transport organisations in the UK, it is necessary to have an understanding of the funding and delivery model of the Public Transport System in the UK.

Public Transport in the majority of the Municipalities is managed by the Council (not the State Government as in Victoria), with the delivery of the services primarily undertaken by the large public transport providers such as Arriva and Great Western.  These transport providers accept routes that provide a profitable outcome, and therefore can provide public transport services to high patronage corridors that are located in high to medium density living without the need for subsidies.

In low density living areas, Councils that engage a public transport operator generally have to subsidise the public transport operator due to low patronage.  To ensure Council budgets are appropriately managed, Councils tend to remove a service if it is not used.

In these areas, Councils have encouraged community organisations to develop Social Enterprise Schemes to assist in delivering the public transport demands for the area.  Support provided to the community organisations include access to a bus to operate a service and small amounts of funding.

The Social Enterprise Schemes do not operate at a profit (can have surplus and community investment), and essentially have to provide a public transport service that looks and feels like a regular public transport service, even though the vehicle may be different.  The routes adopted have to be approved by the Department of Transport, and if the organisation wishes to cancel the route, two months notice is required.  Other opportunities that Social Enterprise Schemes have are the ability to tender for school bus provision and the hire out of the bus service for private use.

These schemes are strongly supported by Councils as they are generally more cost effective than the traditional public transport service provider model; the community 'owns' the system and the system is typically dependant on volunteers. The services also tend to be a little more targeted and supported/promoted at a local level.

Where the Social Enterprise Scheme cannot provide a service to, is the frail and disabled (mobility and sight impaired) members of the community. Dial-a-ride services are developed by Councils to assist in the transport needs of these people and their carers only.

Although the UK has a very strong focus on community transport and a higher level of transport services are provided, the basis of this is, based on the description of the model provided by Clare Cowdery, based on the funding philosophy and responsibility of the local municipalities to provide public transport. Community transport in the UK is a preferred method of service delivery, as the level of subsidy required for each service is significantly less than if it were provided as a traditional public transport service.

For this philosophy to be applied in Victoria, the responsibility of funding public and community transport would have to undergo a monumental transformation, with Councils becoming responsible for the most efficent use of the local communities finances.

## 10.4  Possible Projects for Geelong

Through the research process, the Syndicate Group has identified a number of projects that could be considered as part of a Transport Connections Project. These include:

- The development of specialized / localised brochures for the identified suburbs to promote the use of Public Transport Services, particularly given the roll out of Stage 2 of the Public Bus Routes in the Northern Suburbs and the development of the central interchange in Moorabool Street.

- The development of a cab share system, similar to the project in Wyndham, which provides the opportunity for aged and frail resident still living independently to share the cost of a cab to access community services throughout the municipality.

- The development of a car pooling system, which could encourage employees in the industrial sector, through incentives, to provide other employees without access to private transport a lift to work. This is most applicable to the industries in the northern suburbs and the future Armstrong Creek employment zones. This project would be most beneficial at a regional level.

- The provision of community transport services for transport disadvantaged for access to major local events such as Pako Festa, Audi Victoria Week and the World Cycling Championships.

- Providing increased linkages from surrounding municipalities to services within Geelong. To achieve maximum efficiency, a regional level of coordination would be required.

## 10.5  A Regional Approach

The likely incorporation of a regional focus in future Transport Connections Program has only been a recently presented option in May 2010, and as such it has not been a primary focus of this research project.  Whilst the Syndicate Group has not researched a regional approach in detail, it would like to provide a number of comments regarding this approach .

Regionalisation is an important consideration in continuing to improve Transport Connections outcomes.  A cohesive and coordinated regional approach would provide a framework for:

- the planning and delivery of inter area services;

- the delivery of broader agendas;

- general information sharing including sharing of project outcomes (statistics etc.);

- leveraging and transposing good ideas; and

- delivering greater economies of scale.

During the review of community transport  in the Hunter Region, it was identified that a central role was appointed after many of the local community transport programs were already in place.  This is a similar scenario to what is likely to occur in Victoria and whilst some findings have been recorded in this report, there may be further lessons that can be ascertained from those involved in community transport in the Hunter region.

Geelong is an ideal location for leading the way and trialling the Phase Three Transport Connections regional approach.  The region has sufficient critical mass to test and confirm approaches successfully.

## 11  Conclusion

The Syndicate Group, through the research project, has identified that there is a need for community transport to play a greater role in the City of Greater Geelong Region.  Research indicates disadvantaged cohorts within the Geelong region relating to high unemployment rates, low car ownership,  low education levels, and high population of profound disability and aged.  In addition, community feedback highlights that disadvantaged individuals often find it difficult to access community services and  support, thus limiting their ability to be actively involved in their community and putting them at high risk of social isolation.

Although Geelong has an improving Public Transport System, there remains a number of transport gaps within the community particulary relating to aged, youth and disabled individuals, increasing the pressures on formal and informal support networks.

Community Transport offers flexible transport opportunities creating the links between socially isolated individuals and their community . Although a number of programs already exist within the wider Geelong region including Bellarine, Surf Coast and Golden Plains a coordinated approach across the region and additional services within Geelong's suburbs are required.

As a result of our research, Norlane, Corio and Whittington were identified as suburbs of significant socio-economic and transport disadvantage within the Geelong region,  providing opportunity for a State funded Transport Connection Program. The City of Greater Geelong has been identified as the  most appropriate auspicing agency to submit an application for a Transport Coordinator within these areas.  In addition, we note that the existing transport programs across the G21 region operate in isolation and we would recommend a coordinated regional approach.

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## 13 Appendix 1: Interviews

The project team wishes to thank all those who, through numerous interviews, shared their organisations valuble local knowledge of Community Transport, and in particular the Transport Connections Program.

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## 14  Appendix 2: Websites

http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/lact

http://www.huntercommunitytransport.org.au/

http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/ - Department of Transport

http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/  - Victorian Transport Plan

http://www.australiandisadvantage.org.au/ -

http://www.cto.org.au/  - Community Transport Organisation – NSW

http://www.g21.com.au/

http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/

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Lower Hunter Transport guide

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