

Transport Links:
*A Community Transport
System – for the Community*

Disability Services – Colac District

Final Report

June 2000

Julie Hind, Judith Woodland & John Hind

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Evolving Ways

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Colac Disability Network engaged Evolving Ways to undertake a project to develop a ‘sustainable, responsive and flexible transport system for the disability service system in the Colac Otway catchment’.

Each of the participating day service agencies provides transport for its clients to and from day services and for program activities.

The study was commissioned because of a number of issues related to perceived inefficiencies.

The project ran concurrently with another study that looked at the whole of the disability day service system. As transport is but one function of a more comprehensive service system the reader is referred to the final report of that project for further context.

As part of the project each Network agency was provided with a confidential situational analysis. These were important for each organisation to consider and act upon in preparation for involvement in any coordinated transport system

The project team adopted a participatory approach in conducting the study. The team consulted with each participating agency individually and collectively.

When developing the framework for a new coordinated transport system a workshop was held with representatives from the steering committee, the Department of Human Services (DHS), participating agencies, other disability and community organisations, the client advocate and the commercial sector.

The views of clients and their families and carers were ascertained through face to face interviews and discussion groups.

Current situation

Day service agencies began transporting clients at different stages during the development of their services. Gradually, vehicles were purchased. With the introduction of the Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) program DHS provided vehicles to agencies that were able to develop services for young people moving from school to adult day options.

Originally transport was restricted to taking clients to programs. Over the years agencies have been increasingly expected to provide clients with more opportunities to participate in the community. Access to transport is a critical enabler of community participation. Agencies now drive their clients to many places within the community as part of their programs.

In all there are 19 vehicles used by the five community-based organisations that participated in this study. The most common vehicle is the 12-seater. Seven vehicles are fitted with hoists.

There are three principal functions of transport services provided by the agencies: a) commuting; b) community access as part of programs; and c) community access out-of-hours.

Although the vehicles are in use a lot of the time, the actual number of kilometres travelled is low. When compared with a suggested efficient utilisation rate of 20 800 kilometres per year (used in the United Kingdom), only one of the agencies has most of its vehicles close to or above this rate.

Only one day service agency employs staff specifically for transport duties, though that agency also uses program staff to transport clients. All others use only program staff as both drivers and chaperones. All day service agencies use chaperones, some on every trip and others on an as-needed basis.

The provision of transport is therefore very human resource intensive. All day service agencies address this by rostering staff to share bus runs.

Public transport options are limited. Taxis are the principal mode apart from agency-owned vehicles, though there is only one maxi taxi available in Colac. This makes access difficult for some people who would prefer to use taxis. People report there are problems with the reliability and flexibility of taxis, which further hinders access.

Colac is on the Melbourne-Warrnambool train line. Whilst theoretically possible for people to use the train to access Geelong for entertainment and shopping, it is reported as not a practical solution and few people with disabilities use this means of travel.

There are three bus hire companies in the catchment area and the Shire operates a bus, driven by volunteers, to enable people who are aged or have disabilities to access key facilities in town.

Other community organisations operate buses for their clients. These include Colac Specialist School and Colanda Residential Services. Both of these have cooperative arrangements with some of the Disability Network agencies.

Strengths of the current transport services include:

- Disability agencies are committed to assisting clients access services and the community and expect to remain involved in some way in the future;
- There is an extensive fleet, which is kept in good order. Several vehicles have wheelchair access;
- All agencies have vehicle replacement strategies in place; and
- There has been a good history of agencies working together.

Emerging issues

Community access

Transport is vital if agencies are to provide programs in the community. However, it appears that some clients spend inordinate amounts of time in vehicles and are engaging in community access as an end in itself rather than as a means to participating in the life of the community.

A major issue for clients and their families and carers is the limited opportunities for recreation and leisure activities because of limited access to transport.

Costs

All agencies report concern at the high level of expenditure on transport and the significant impact this has on agency resources. Whilst all agencies can identify direct costs such as registration, insurance, maintenance and fuel, none fully costs client transport. Salary costs of staff to drive and chaperone as well as the costs of management, administration and coordination are not attributed to transport. These are hidden costs to agencies.

From estimates provided by agencies a total of 5 full time positions are used across the four day service agencies to provide commuting transport. This is a significant resource that is not available for programs and associated supports.

Agencies report a high number of clients in need of a chaperone, which increases the overall costs to agencies. For these clients, none of the agencies implements transport plans to develop strategies that might, over time, minimise the need for a chaperone.

Agencies have separate transport fee structures. Two agencies do not ask clients to contribute to costs even though most clients are reported to be in receipt of the Mobility Allowance, which is granted to assist people access vocational services.

The cost of transport for after-hours activities is an issue reported by many families and carers and consequently clients are forced to participate in social and recreation activities in groups to reduce costs.

Commuting transport, as it is currently organised, impacts adversely upon day service program time as well as on preparation and planning time. This is a significant issue especially given the high support needs of the majority of clients in the service system.

Responsibility

Day service agencies are required by funding bodies to coordinate transport for clients. They are not obliged to actually provide it. However there is strong expectation by staff, families and carers that day service agencies are responsible for transport. Consequently the problem is not a shared one. A perceived dependence on the day service agencies for transport perpetuates the view that transport is a welfare issue rather than a community infrastructure issue.

The project team believes the perception that day service agencies are solely responsible for transport should be challenged. Accommodation support services should be encouraged to share the responsibility and, where possible, also share the financial burden.

Operational issues

Day service staff rely heavily on the bus runs as a means of communicating with accommodation support staff because there are no formal mechanisms in place. There is a need to develop other strategies.

Most vehicles are under utilised especially after-hours. Low utilisation rates have implications in relation to the high cost of vehicle administration and usage.

Each agency operates its service separately from each other resulting in numerous crossovers and duplications.

Further need

Clients of the day services are not the only people in need of transport. Examples of other transport-disadvantaged people include the elderly, people in outlying towns, youths, parents with young children, people with no car and people with limited incomes.

The framework for the model

The model was developed collaboratively by key stakeholders and was influenced by a) the models and experiences elsewhere; b) the peculiarities of Colac; and c) features expressed by the participating key stakeholders.

The brief gave seven components for inclusion in a model:

Community transport

The proposed model incorporates a broader definition of transport disadvantaged. Although its primary focus is on the disability day services sector, the model is capable of incorporating the broader community, should this be desired and appropriate sources of funding found.

A system

The model incorporates a systems approach through:

- Inclusion of systems advocacy in the role of the coordinator;
- The identification and use of all existing transport resources and infrastructure, including the commercial sector; and
- A community advisory group that is comprised of all key stakeholders across the broader community.

Coordinated

The model utilises a coordinated approach through:

- Coordinating existing resources in a variety of ways;
- Including systematic planning as part of the role of the transport coordinator;
- Offering a range of fleet management options;
- Overseeing the development of good practice and common policies and procedures; and
- Coordinating service planning and improvement.

For the community

The model suggests that the transport coordinator be auspiced and governed by an existing community-based organisation. It also includes a community advisory group comprised of a wide range of key stakeholders.

Sustainable

The model recommends a gradual implementation and the use of a community development approach.

Flexible

The model is capable of incorporating a variety of service delivery responses. These are critical to the model if it is to meet its underlying principles:

- People need suitable transport and mobility assistance to enable them to participate in the life of the community; and
- Service delivery options should match a person's individual needs.

Flexibility is also enhanced through systems advocacy and the community advisory group's role in the continuing development and improvement of the system.

Coherent

The model has been developed collaboratively with key stakeholders to reflect the particular local situation.

The model

Two models are described:

- a) A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector; and
- b) Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)

The first outlines a coordinated model for use within the disability services sector and the second proposes a broader scheme for use throughout the broader community. Both propose a coordinator, employed by a community-based organisation, to manage the service.

Some critical philosophies and approaches that shape the model and would influence the implementation underpin both models:

- Transport is a community infrastructure issue, not a welfare issue;
- The community overall, with support from all levels of government, has the responsibility to solve access-related issues;
- Provision of transport by community-based organisations is the provision of last resort. All other avenues should be explored and utilised first;
- Transport solutions are developed through a community development approach;

- Commercial operators are important contributors; and
- Solutions should be many and varied.

In each model the coordinator would be responsible for ensuring five key functions occur. The breadth of the functions is such that it is unlikely that any single person could appropriately undertake all roles. This may be overcome by employing part time people for particular aspects of the system or by partnering or contracting to other organisations with particular expertise.

The five key functions are:

1. Linking people to existing transport services, programs, information and aids
2. Brokering of transport through:
 - The purchase of a service;
 - Negotiating an alteration to an existing service;
 - Helping providers develop a new service;
 - Contracting services; and
 - Negotiating access to volunteer services.
3. Coordination of transport through:
 - Helping providers link with each other;
 - Provision of support and advice to providers;
 - Development of policies and procedures; f
 - Facilitating interagency collaboration;
 - Promoting good practice;
 - Maintaining a resource register;
 - Planning;
 - Evaluation; and
 - Continuous quality improvement.
4. Systems advocacy through:
 - Lobbying;
 - Research and development;
 - Community education;
 - Strategic planning;
 - Advising providers and government bodies of barriers and issues; and
 - Facilitating local solutions to barriers and issues.
5. Provision of transport and mobility assistance where other services do not exist.

The model proposes three fleet options:

- a) Fleet owned and operated by individual agencies but contracted to the community transport service during non-peak periods
- b) Fleet owned by individual agencies but managed by the community transport service
- c) Fleet owned and operated by the community transport service.

Implementation

Key aspects of implementation are then outlined:

- There is a suggestion for a staged approach, with day service agencies agreeing to coordinate commuting transport and pooling vehicles as a minimum.
- Various operational issues related to vehicles are noted.
- It is suggested that a 0.6 scheduling position and a 0.2 community development position be employed, funded pro rata by each agency.
- There is a call for a common pricing structure for clients to be developed.
- Logistical issues related to matching routes and people, drivers and chaperones and the deployment of staff are raised.
- Some logistical aids are mentioned.
- The need to decide upon governance is noted.
- Some potential areas for efficiency gains and savings are identified including:
 - Pooling of vehicles to better match vehicles with need;
 - Rationalisation of vehicles;
 - Review of the need for chaperones for some clients;
 - Exploration of options with commercial operators;
 - Development of some volunteering; and
 - Developing better financial management information systems that will accurately identify and monitor full costs of transport.

The report concludes by outlining key steps and issues:

- Establishing a working group to oversee initial stages of a program development phase;
- Developing a Memorandum of Understanding;
- Developing an implementation plan;
- Identifying resources for program development;
- Briefing key stakeholders;
- Exploring operational aspects of other coordinated transport services;
- Identifying recurrent operational resources with participating agencies;
- Clarifying the degree of coordination;
- Identifying the host organisation;
- Establishing a community advisory group;
- Establishing a strategic plan for the service;
- Developing infrastructure for the service; and
- Implementing the operational plan.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Colac Disabilities Network received a grant from the Department of Human Services to develop a coordinated system of transport for the disability services system in the Colac Otway area. Evolving Ways was engaged by the Colac Disabilities Network to undertake a project to develop and implement a “sustainable, responsive and flexible transport system for the disability service system in the Colac Otway catchment”.¹

Participating agencies were those non-government agencies providing day services and accommodation services to people with disabilities:

- Colac Adult and Continuing Education Inc. (ACE); and
- Colac Community Development Association (CCDA);
- Colac Otway Disability Accommodation (CODA).
- Lions Adult Services (LAS);
- Karingal Colac Otway Services (KCOS)

Transport services are provided by each of these agencies. The four day services provide transport for clients to commute between their place of residence and the agencies’ bases. They also assist clients travel to a range of places within the community, as part of programs. CODA provides transport to residents to enable them to travel within the community and, in some cases, to and from day programs. Karingal also has a residence and the residential staff transport clients within the community.

In addition to the transport services provided by these five agencies, Colac Otway Health Services transports people with disabilities to its Adult Day Activity Support Service (ADASS) and DHS, through its residential services, provides client transport.

The study was commissioned because of a number of perceived issues. These centred on the high cost of operating client transport and the belief that a coordinated system might reduce the overall costs to organisations and achieve improved efficiencies.

1.2. Purpose of the project

The aim of the project was to develop and implement a “sustainable, responsive and flexible transport system for the disability service system in the Colac Otway catchment”.²

¹ Project brief

² Project brief

1.3. Scope of the project

This project set out to achieve an improved way of delivering transport services to clients of the disability day services and the non-government agencies providing accommodation services. This was to be achieved through the development of a model that would:

- Provide consumers with an improved service;
- Enable coordination of transport between the agencies;
- Be implementable and financially sustainable for these agencies;
- Address transport-related issues facing the agencies;
- Consider the interface between disability day services and accommodation services such as Colanda Residential Services and Colac Residential Services;
- Be supported, in principle, by other providers of community transport services; and
- Have potential for being broadened, or adapted, to become a wider community transport system across the catchment area.

This project ran concurrently with another – a Services Redevelopment Project. That project was also conducted by Evolving Ways. Its purpose was to develop an integrated and responsive disability service system in the Colac catchment area.

Transport is but one function within a more comprehensive service system. It is important for transport to be viewed within the broader context. The reader is therefore referred to the final report of that project.

1.4. Management of the project

The Colac Disability Network was responsible for the overall management of the project. The review was overseen by a steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the five participating agencies, plus a representative from DHS.

The members of this committee are listed in Appendix 1.

2. Methodology

The project team consulted with each participating agency, individually and collectively. Some activities were undertaken concurrently with the aforementioned Service Review Project. This made more efficient use of project resources and reduced time commitments by key stakeholders, thus minimising disruption to the agencies.

For each agency, analysis of resources currently contributed to transport services was undertaken. Information was sought through a number of pro formas, which the agencies were asked to complete. These were to provide information about vehicles, usage, coverage, costs and a sample of time spent by clients on transport.

An analysis of transport resources, operations and issues was undertaken for each agency and included in confidential agency reports. These reports were important for each agency to consider and act upon in preparation for involvement in any redevelopment of transport services across the sector.

To provide information for this analysis, the team undertook a number of tasks with each agency:

- Discussion with management team of the agency;
- A forum with staff;
- Discussion with clients of the agency and their families;
- Discussion with other agencies;
- Discussion with regional DHS staff;
- Examination of agency documentation;
- Examination of financial statements;
- A workshop with staff, management and, in most cases, committee of management, to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual agencies' transport services; and
- An inter-agency workshop to identify the external environment within which the transport services operate.

A list of people with whom the project team consulted is provided in Appendix 2.

To develop a model for a coordinated transport system suitable for the Colac area, a workshop was held with the steering committee, representatives from each of the participating agencies, from other relevant agencies, from DHS and commercial operators of transport. The results of this workshop were identification of the essential features of a model. The project team drew upon its knowledge of models operating elsewhere to contribute to discussion and propose possible models for consideration.

The steering committee further refined the preferred model, as presented in this report.

3. Overview of current situation

3.1. History

Agencies began transporting clients at different stages during their development.

LAS is the longest-established agency providing disability services in Colac. It began transporting clients in 1970, bringing clients from Birregurra via taxi. The CEO indicated the bulk of transport funding was originally provided for transporting school age children. This was prior to the transfer of children to the Department of Education and the establishment of Colac Specialist School.

Gradually, vehicles were purchased as money became available for that purpose. As other agencies were funded to provide disability services, they too received grants for vehicles to transport clients.

With the introduction of the Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) program, vehicles were provided to agencies that were to develop services for young people moving into the programs.

Originally transport was largely restricted to bringing clients to and from day programs. Over the years there has been a philosophical change to service provision. Agencies are now expected to provide clients with more opportunities to participate in the community. Agencies largely do this through 'community access' programs and client transport is provided by the agencies for these programs.

3.2. Transport functions

There are three principal functions of transport services provided by the agencies:

- a) Commuting – transporting clients between their places of residence and programs. Most agencies operate regular bus runs morning and afternoon. One agency also takes clients back to their residence at lunchtime and back to the program after lunch.
- b) Community access as part of programs – during program time there is an emphasis on clients being away from agency centres and participating in activities within the wider community.
- c) Community access out of program hours – the accommodation services have vehicles based at some houses, which are used to allow clients to access a range of activities in the community. The agencies providing day services do not provide out-of-hours transport for community access.

3.3. Vehicles

Table 1: Summary of vehicles operated by the 5 agencies for client transport

	22 seater buses with hoist	22 seater buses without hoist	12 seater buses with hoist	12 seater buses without hoist	8 seater & less (including cars) with hoist	8 seater & less (including cars) without hoist	Total
ACE	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
CCDA	0	0	0	4 *	0	0	4 *
Karingal	0	0	3	0	1	0	4
LAS	0	1	0	3	1	1	6
CODA	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total	0	2	4	7	3	3	19

* CCDA uses a vehicle belonging to CRS

Overall, 19 vehicles are used by the five agencies to transport clients. Of these, 18 are owned by the agencies in question, with the 19th being contracted by CCDA from CRS. In total there are 18 vehicles attached to the five non-government disability service programs that participated in this study.

The most common vehicle used is the 12- seater, of which there are ten attached to the specific programs. In all, seven vehicles are fitted with hoists.

3.4. Utilisation

As well as the local town routes, there are regular long runs. Two agencies have a cooperative arrangement to commute to and from Camperdown. One agency provides a vehicle and one provides a driver. The Camperdown run includes Carpenteit and Tomahawk Creek, a round trip of nearly 90 kilometres. One agency operates a run including Winchelsea and Cressy. This round trip is approximately 130 kilometres.

The majority of trips for community access as part of programs are around the town, with some trips further afield such as when groups go bush walking or picnicking.

The accommodation service's vehicles are used to meet the needs of clients as they arise. Most use is outside of day program hours. Because of the cost of transport to residents, staff report that travel is likely to be localised, though shared trips to Geelong are arranged from time to time.

Although the buses are in use a lot of the time, the actual number of kilometres travelled is low, as indicated in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Vehicle usage by time and kilometres

3. Overview of current situation

Agency	Vehicle	Total hours/week vehicle usage	Total average kilometres/week	Average kilometres/hour usage	Total average kilometres per year
ACE	1	22 ½	260	11.60	11 960
	2	30	900	30.00	41 400
	3	10	165	16.50	7 590
CCDA	1	16	276	17.25	12 696
	2	24	186	7.75	8 556
	3	15	157	10.50	2 622
	4	26	300	11.50	13 800
Karingal	1	27½	248	9.00	12 896
	2	37½	251	6.70	12 550
	3	35½	1220	34.37	61 000
	4	30	308	10.27	15 400
LAS	1	31	600	19.35	27 600
	2	27	450	16.70	20 700
	3	27	200	7.40	9 200
	4	33	1500	45.50	69 000
	5	35	400	11.00	18 400
	6	44	800	18.20	36 800
CODA	1	11	160	14.55	7 360
	2	8	160	20.00	7 360

Vehicle use varies significantly. For example, on average, vehicles:

- Are used from between eight to 44 hours per week; and
- Travel between 157 to 1 500 kilometres per week or 2 622 kilometres per year and 69,000 per year, respectively.

A United Kingdom community transport research paper³ indicates that a low utilisation rate is 13 000 miles per year (20 800 kilometres per year). Only one agency has most of its vehicles near or above this rate. Therefore most vehicles operated by the agencies have a low utilisation rate. A low utilisation rate has implications in relation to the high cost of administration to output.

3.5. Staffing

³ Taylor, J. & Lavery, I., "Evaluating Community Transport in an Urban Area – Theory & Practice" *Conference Proceedings on Transport & Mobility for elderly & Disabled People*, Vol. 1, Indomed Pty. Ltd. 1998.

Only one day service agency, LAS, employs staff specifically for transport duties. They have three drivers and a chaperone to undertake the bulk of the commuting transport. Program staff also drive buses on three runs within the town to transfer clients to and from the centre. This has been a recent addition to staff duties.

All other agencies use program staff to transport clients to and from programs, both as drivers and chaperones, as well as providing transport to implement programs within the community. Chaperones are used by all agencies. One agency has a policy of a chaperone being on every trip. Other agencies vary chaperone use according to perceived need.

The provision of client transport is human resource intensive. Figures provided by agencies indicate a relatively high proportion of staff time spent providing transport. This has an impact on available planning and preparation time.

All agencies address this by rostering staff to share bus runs. This limits the disruption to planning and preparation time for individual staff members.

The time spent in commuting transport varies significantly between agencies. Of those agencies providing day services and not employing transport-specific staff, the following rates are indicated from data supplied by the agencies:

Table 3: Number of program staff hours spent in transporting clients to and from centres

Agency	Number of clients	Staff hours commuting	Average staff hours per client
CCDA	74	38	0.51
Colac ACE	42	39.8	0.95
LAS	47	75	1.60
Karingal	24	24	1.00

LAS uses the most number of hours per client to undertake the commuting transport, 1.6 per week and CCDA the least, 0.5. ACE and Karingal both use about 1 hour per client per week.

3.6. Financial situation

The provision of transport is resource intensive for each of the four not-for-profit day service agencies. This is further discussed on page 12.

3.7. Public, commercial and other community transport

Public transport options are very limited in the Colac area. Colac is on the train line between Geelong and Warrnambool. Agencies report that the use of trains to go to

3. Overview of current situation

Geelong for shopping or entertainment is not practical because the times of operation are not suitable.

Taxis are the principal mode of transport apart from agency-owned buses. Consistent reports indicated problems with the reliability of taxis. Also, there is only one maxi taxi in a town with a high population of people with mobility problems. This makes access difficult for some people who would otherwise prefer to use a taxi.

There were reports that taxi drivers have become more responsive to the needs of people with disabilities. The taxi company has reported a willingness to work cooperatively with community organisations to develop alternative options.

The Shire owns a bus which is driven by volunteers and which provides limited service to people in the Home and Community Care (HACC) eligibility group. This bus also has a specific regular route to take people to shops, banks etc. Colanda staff reported that the Shire had offered to include Colanda as one of the regular stops but this was not taken up by Colanda because it was felt there were sufficient departmental vehicles available for clients.

There are three companies that provide hire buses.

Other organisations operating buses for their own client groups include the Colac Specialist School and Colanda Residential Services. Both of these have some cooperative arrangements with the agencies participating in this project

3.8. Strengths of current situation

Commitment

The agencies are committed to assisting their clients access services. Staff are willing to undertake commuting transport as part of their duties and welcome the opportunity to better know the clients and their families and carers.

The agencies are willing to financially support the transport service and have each indicated a willingness to participate cooperatively in a new coordinated system.

They recognise their respective responsibilities to ensure that any changes are planned and negotiated with key stakeholders, especially people with a disability and their families or carers.

Fleet management

In all, there is an extensive fleet for both commuting and program use. There are several wheelchair accessible vehicles and all agencies have access to such vehicles, either because they are in their fleet or they contract with another organisation.

Vehicles are reported to be in good order. One agency operates a comprehensive quality assurance system for its fleet that is of commercial standard. All agencies have provision for depreciation of vehicles and two have replacement budgets.

Client support

Transport is used to meet perceived client needs. All agencies provide chaperones where there is a perceived need. They also provide extensive levels of community access, made possible by the ready access of vehicles.

There has been a good history of agencies working cooperatively together to provide some bus runs to outlying areas and to coordinate transport for those clients who attend more than one service. In this way clients have received a more streamlined service.

4. Emerging issues

4.1. Community access

Community access programs

An emphasis on community access by the DHS has greatly increased the number of activities conducted away from the centres. Day services staff and management indicate the value of access to transport in allowing a significant proportion of the program to be community based. These programs mean that all of the day services want access to vehicles during program time.

However from information obtained from surveys completed by program staff for a sample of clients it appears that many clients spend inordinate amounts of time in the buses as part of these community access programs.

Whilst it important to help clients access a range of community venues and facilities the amount of time many clients spend in buses suggests that the time in the vehicles might be the dominant activity. Community access is about participating in the life of the community, not simply being in it. It is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Accessing the community after hours

A major issue for clients and their families and carers is the limited transport options for recreation and leisure. Outside of program time, people are only able to participate in activities if they can walk, use a taxi or rely on family members.

The exception to this is the use of vehicles owned and operated by residential services. Even this is limited by the availability of staff to drive and, where necessary, chaperone. DHS staff report that not all the DHS operated residential houses have access to vehicles. Likewise one of CODA's houses does not have a vehicle. Residents in these houses have fewer options and generally have to rely on shared outings with residents in other houses.

Families and carers report difficulties in relying on taxis. There is only one wheelchair accessible taxi in town. Whilst some people report successful experiences with taxis others report some unfavourable experiences. The most common of these were related to taxis arriving late or not at all, or charging the person full fare if he or she did not have the concession card on them, despite the driver knowing the passenger.

4.2. Cost

Impact upon agency budgets

All agencies reported concern at the high level of expenditure on transport and the significant effect this has on agency resources. The high cost items for most agencies include vehicle depreciation and salaries. At least two agencies cited the maintenance of hoists as an expensive item. The agencies have made some attempt to reduce the costs by negotiating with the maintenance company as a loose partnership. These agencies also reported that vehicles fitted with hoists have a lower re-sale value than other vehicles. Whilst all agencies are able to identify direct costs such as registration, maintenance, fuel and so forth, none fully cost client transport.

Each agency has significant hidden transport costs related to the practice of program staff being used to transport clients to and from the centre at the start and end of each day. Agencies do not identify these salary costs as a transport cost. Likewise, transport management, coordination and administration is undertaken as part of some staff's duties and nor are these salary costs attributed to transport.

As part of this study agencies gave an estimate of their full transport expenditures. These estimates have not been provided in this report because not all agencies were able to estimate a reliable figure for each expenditure item, therefore the estimates provided are not directly comparable. This exercise highlighted two critical issues:

- Agencies currently have no way of accurately attributing costs to transport; and
- Agency estimates of the cost of providing coordination, administration and management of their transport service varied greatly. Two agencies did not provide an estimate for this function. Of the other two, one estimated as low as \$460 per year and the other, \$3 450 per year. Whilst this latter figure is more likely to be closer to the actual cost, neither reflects the amount of resources referred to by people when speaking about this function.

Cost to clients

Day service transport

The Mobility Allowance is provided by the Commonwealth Government to assist people access vocational programs. Most clients accessing programs at the day service agencies are reported to be in receipt of the Mobility Allowance. This should be used to help offset the costs of travel associated with day services.

Day service agencies report they assume that where an agency asks for a contribution towards transport that this money comes from the Mobility Allowance.

There is no common approach to charges to clients for transport. One agency charges 25 cents per kilometre per client. Another charges clients \$2 per day within five kilometres of the centre and \$3 outside this radius.

Two agencies make no direct charge to clients for transport. One of these agencies cited a belief that it would have prohibitive costs of complying with regulations if a

charge is made for transport. The other cited a mixture of needing to keep prices at a competitive rate and family expectation. It appears that some families, especially those whose family member accesses the service system via FFYA, believe that the client should not contribute to any of the associated costs of day services. This expectation is not in keeping with other disability services, for example, clients are expected to contribute to the cost of accommodation support.

Where agencies do not ask clients to contribute to the cost of transport, the project team assumes that the Mobility Allowance for these clients is not used for the purpose for which it is given. It is also possible, given the reported level of contribution asked by the other agencies, that even where a contribution is made this does not equate to the total of the Mobility Allowance.

The project team believes it is fair for the whole of the Mobility Allowance to be directed to the costs of accessing day services. Implementation of the proposed model should assume that clients' Mobility Allowance will help offset the costs of day service transport.

After hours transport

Families and carers report that people's after hours options are restricted because of the cost of transport. Many people cannot afford to use the taxi service, even with additional concessions, because of limited income, which is directed to their living situation and their day service. Most recreational and social outings are reported to occur in groups and in close proximity to Colac to reduce the cost to individuals. Residential services reported that this resulted in a lack of spontaneity for people. To keep transport costs down through sharing travel there is a need to plan social activities well ahead.

4.3. Impact on programs

Reduced program time

There is variation in agencies' approaches to the place of commuting transport in the service. Some see it as separate from the program and some see it as part of the program. The latter approach leads to late starting and early finishing times for programs. It also results in reduced program time for clients.

A further impact on programs occurs where agencies conduct more than one run each day per vehicle. One agency does a twice-daily pick up and drop off. Another uses a vehicle to do two runs, thus lengthening the time staff are away from the centre and programs.

The practice of using program staff or employing dedicated drivers to undertake commuting transport is an historical one in Colac. When day services were established they were given a capital grant for the purchase of a vehicle. There was an expectation by accommodation support staff and DHS, at the time, that these would

be used for client commuting. Further, community-based accommodation services report their funding does not include the capacity to provide commuting to and from day services, though there are some examples of this occurring where it is in the best interests of the client. The provision of commuting transport by day services is not a requirement of DHS. Agencies are required to coordinate transport for clients.

Colac agencies have interpreted this as actual service provision which, given the lack of other local transport, is understandable. However, this practice is costly to agencies and clients in terms of lost program time. Three agencies use the equivalent of one full staff position each week and the fourth, two full time positions. In all, five full time staff positions are directed away from programs towards the provision of commuting transport.

This is a significant issue given the complex client needs with which day service agencies are faced.

Whilst it is efficient for program staff to operate transport as a component of programs, for example when accessing the community, agencies should question whether it is efficient for program staff to provide commuting transport.

Other options might be more efficient for the operation of commuting transport and the administration of transport. These might include contracting part of the service to commercial operators or coordinating efforts between agencies. Negotiation with Colanda Residential Services to undertake some of the commuting transport and provide some chaperones might also result in greater efficiencies and greater equity in relation to the overall task.

The costs of transport, and the resultant impact upon programs, are made higher because of the use of chaperones on most runs. Agencies report a high number of clients in need of a chaperone because of complex needs, often associated with challenging behaviours. Day service agencies also report an obligation to provide chaperones for Colanda residents because of Colanda's policy to have chaperones in all vehicles.

It does not seem that any agency prepares and implements transport plans for these clients. Such plans might help focus agencies, in conjunction with the relevant accommodation support service, on developing strategies to minimise the need for chaperones. Furthermore, coordination of travel arrangements between agencies for clients in need of chaperones might gain efficiencies. Strategies for reducing the need for chaperones

Reduced planning and preparation time

All agencies report that commuting transport impacts upon staff planning and preparation time. This is a critical issue in relation to an agency's capacity to provide coordinated client programs, to develop well-planned client programs, to liaise with necessary others, and so forth.

Communication

Staff of all agencies indicate the benefit of undertaking bus runs as a means of informal communication with residential staff. This was sometimes given as a reason for continuing the existing transport arrangements. If however there were other forms of communication and coordination this benefit might not be as great.

At present the use of program staff in the client commuting transport appears to be an expensive means of gaining informal communication.

4.4. Whose responsibility?

There is an assumption made by day service agencies and accommodation support services that the day service agencies will undertake the actual provision of commuting transport. The project team believes that this assumption should be challenged.

The reduction to program time is significant when day service agencies accept this responsibility. Further, while the responsibility is assumed to rest solely with day service agencies, accommodation support services and families do not need to share the responsibility for the transport, the problems or looking for solutions.

This expectation results in what some agencies report as the provision of transport that could more reasonably be expected to be done by family members or accommodation support staff. Examples given include taking clients to medical appointments, taking a client home if he or she is sick, taking the client home if he or she had forgotten to bring lunch. Whilst the agencies make these trips as a goodwill gesture they have resource implications. They add to the cost of the transport service, they further reduce the time staff are available to deliver programs and they perpetuate the view that day service agencies have the sole responsibility for transport.

We strongly suggest issues of access are not the sole responsibility of day service agencies. It is a community infrastructure issue and as such all parts of the service system, as well as the client and his or her family, have a joint responsibility. We recommend that day service agencies negotiate a sharing of the transport load with accommodation support services, particularly with Colanda Residential Services. In this way, day service agencies could free up some resources for programs.

The disability network should also work collaboratively with other sections of the community to ensure that transport moves from a welfare-focused issue to one of community infrastructure.

4.5. Utilisation rates

Although most of the 19 vehicles are used for many hours in peak times, overall the utilisation rate is low. During peak times vehicles are travelling over small distances and each has significant amounts of downtime in non-peak times. In particular, the

agencies providing day programs have vehicles that are not used at evenings and weekends. Colanda Residential Services has vehicles that are not generally used during weekdays.

If using the U.K. study, as mentioned on page 7, as a comparison, only six of the 19 vehicles travel more than 20 000 kilometres or more per year, with most doing less than 14 000 per year. This has implications in relation to the high cost of administration to output.

4.6. Operations

Currently each agency operates its transport separately. Each picks up and drops off at Colanda Residential Services and community-based residential houses. Consequently there are numerous crossovers and duplications in the regular bus runs. It is common for two or more buses to arrive at a residential house or unit. For those assisting clients who use a wheelchair this is reported as being satisfactory. However for all others, this duplication is considered inefficient.

4.7. Other people who are transport disadvantaged

A number of people reported the isolation of people, outside of the client group, who are transport disadvantaged and who have limited access to transport options.

Examples included:

- the elderly living in the units at St. Mary’s and the Lions’ flats;
- people living in outlying towns;
- youths in need of transport on Friday and Saturday nights;
- older women who have moved into town from farms and are relatively socially isolated;
- parents with young children and no access to a car during the day;
- people with limited incomes.

5. The Framework

The brief for the project outlined the deliverable as:

- A **community transport system** that is **sustainable, coordinated, flexible** and **coherent**; and whilst primarily focused on improving how disability day service transport is provided
- The model should form the basis of a **broader community transport system**.

Seven components were therefore identified as the basic framework for the proposed model:

- i. Community transport
- ii. A system
- iii. Coordinated system
- iv. For the community
- v. Flexible
- vi. Sustainable
- vii. Coherent

The model proposed in the next chapter was developed using these 7 components and was influenced by:

- The models and experiences from elsewhere;
- The peculiarities of the Colac situation; and
- The features expressed by participating key stakeholders of this study.

The following discussion takes each of the seven components, addressing each of the three influences. At the conclusion of each component is a statement as to how these influences have affected the model.

5.1. Community transport

Models and experiences from elsewhere

Historically, community transport has been narrowly defined. It has been based on strict service eligibility and associated with purposeful activity. Hence community transport has generally been defined as the provision of transport services to the frail aged and people with disabilities to enable them to undertake day activities, attend medical appointments, go shopping or participate in social activities. In recent years, a number of studies in Australia have broadened the definition to include anyone in the community who is 'transport disadvantaged', either permanently or temporarily, and who needs to participate in the life of the community.

The TRACS report⁴ defines 'transport disadvantaged' as those people with frequent mobility or access problems either because they:

- cannot use conventional public transport regardless of its provision and efficiency;
- or

⁴ Watters, S., *TRACS*, QCOSS, 1996

- could potentially use conventional public transport but are unable to do so due to its absence.

A similar definition is provided by Ashby et al⁵. That report noted that “...the characteristics of ‘transport disadvantaged’ may include:

- age, disability, car ownership, income, Aboriginality, ethnicity and accessibility;
- the need to address the equity issues that recognise the rights of all people to move about their community; and
- the inability of many people to use public transport due to structural issues or its absence.”

Along with these broader definitions has developed a broader conceptual framework. There has been a move away from the traditional tight service eligibility (aged or disabled) and the associated purposeful activity to a framework of common need associated with people needing to get somewhere.

Hind and Hind⁶ argue that community transport is not a welfare issue but one of community infrastructure. Transport is a crucial means of participating in the life of the community and is required by everyone. As such it assumes a key question to be: *Does the community have sufficient and appropriate forms of infrastructure to enable its citizens to actively participate in the total life of the community?*⁷

A Queensland HACC Best Practice document⁸ gives the purpose of community transport as “...to assist any person in the community who does not have access (for whatever reasons) to adequate transport.”⁹ It coins the term ‘coordinated transport for the community’.

The Colac situation

There are potentially many people in and around Colac who are transport disadvantaged. Colac has a relatively high number of people with disabilities, due mainly to the existence of Colanda Residential Services. Study informants reported that many people in the small outlying towns are isolated because of the cost of travel. The people reported to be most affected in these towns are the elderly, people with disabilities who might wish to travel for purposes other than to attend their day services, women whose partners and husbands needed the only family car for work and youths. There is no public transport other than the train service to Geelong, though the Colac Otway Shire operates a shuttle bus around the shopping precinct.

The views of participating key stakeholders

⁵ Ashby, J., Laurie, D., Richardson, J & Ciliak, M., *Getting There: The Impact of Community Transport on the Home & Community Care Program and Service Users: Future Directions*, Villamanta Publishing Services, June 1997, pg. 66

⁶ Hind, J., & Hind, J., *Out & About: A Transport Coordination Study in the La Trobe Valley*, Larne Pty. Ltd., August 1998

⁷ Ibid, pg. 29

⁸ QCOSS, *Putting Community into Community Transport: Best Practice*, International Training Specialists, October 1997

⁹ Ibid, pg. 10

The participating key stakeholders supported the idea of a broader definition of community transport and conceptual framework, as noted in the literature and discussed above.

The proposed model for the Colac Disability Services Network incorporates the broader definition of transport disadvantaged and the concept of transport for the community. Although its primary focus is on the disability day services sector, the model is capable of incorporating the broader community, should this be desired and appropriate sources of funding found.

5.2. A system

Models and experiences from elsewhere

A transport system implies something more than people having access to vehicles and being moved smoothly from one location to another. It implies the need to affect services, behaviours, requirements, and so forth, that might impact upon a person's capacity and ability to move about his or her community. This involves a focus on systems change and a framework that includes attention to a person's mobility and transport needs. It also implies that all services and infrastructure in a given community should be utilised. Hence a community transport system that works for the whole of the community will be viewed as part of the broader transport sector.

A key platform of the La Trobe Valley model developed by Hind and Hind¹⁰ is systems change. This is one of the critical functions of the coordinating body. One of its responsibilities is to identify and address the systems issues that further disadvantage those without access to transport.

The Coordinated Transport for the Community model (CTC)¹¹ likewise advocates the importance of systems change. "A CTC not only assists the person to get where they want but it is also interested in understanding the reasons for that person's transport disadvantage...as the basis for its negotiation with generic service providers/Government Departments, in addition to its own service planning."¹²

The systems issue can be advanced by ensuring community transport is linked in some critical way to the broader transport sector. In Belfast, Northern Ireland¹³ a consortium of the main community transport schemes have joined to consolidate current operations and develop a strategic role for community transport within the broader transport arena.

¹⁰ Hind & Hind, 1998, op. cit.

¹¹ QCOSS, 1997, op. cit.

¹² Ibid. pg. 10

¹³ Taylor, J., & Lavery, I., "Evaluating Community Transport in an Urban Area - Theory & Practice", in *Conference Proceedings - Setting the Pace - 8th International Conference on Transport & Mobility for Elderly & Disabled People*, Vol. 1, Indomed Pty. Ltd. 1998

In Denmark community transport is an integral part of the broader service system rather than a separate service left to the not-for-profit sector.¹⁴ Since 1992 all Danish public transport companies have been required to establish services for people with disabilities, including specialised door-to-door transport, individualised timetables and specialised buses.

De Boer and Diepens¹⁵ in the Netherlands note that a person's integration is assisted through transport. They argue this is further enhanced when transport services, themselves, are integrated. They suggest a planning process that brings together social, transport and administrative experts, representatives of user groups, providers and relevant government bodies.

Hind and Hind¹⁶ incorporate the use of both commercial and not-for-profit operators in service provision as one way of better utilising all existing resources. Further, their model includes a community advisory group made up of representatives of all major stakeholders. This group is made up of not-for-profit providers, commercial operators, service users, local government, relevant departments from state and federal governments, the Taxi Association and other relevant community interests. It has an important role in systems change, ensuring that a whole community focus is retained and participating in the continuing improvement of the system.

This approach is also a feature of the Inner South and Coastal Community Transport Regional Transport Network¹⁷, which brings together a range of stakeholders including state and local government, health and welfare agencies, taxis, public and community transport providers and non-government organisations. Part of the Network's role is to improve transport access for people who are transport disadvantaged, to undertake service development and to raise awareness of needs.

Corcoran¹⁸, in writing of his personal experiences in using community transport in Australia, points out that accessible transport is not only about providing access to vehicles but also about footpaths, buildings and all modes of transport.

¹⁴ Dahlin, P., "Public Transport for the Disabled in Denmark", in *Conference Proceedings - Setting the Pace - 8th International Conference on Transport & Mobility for Elderly & Disabled People*, Vol. 2, Indomed Pty. Ltd. 1998

¹⁵ De Boer, E., & Diepens, J., "Integration of the Disabled & Public Transport, Planning for Progress in the Netherlands", in *Conference Proceedings - Setting the Pace - 8th International Conference on Transport & Mobility for Elderly & Disabled People*, Vol. 1, Indomed Pty. Ltd. 1998

¹⁶ Hind & Hind, 1998, op. cit.

¹⁷ Wake, B., *Inner South & Coastal Community Transport Network - Draft Memorandum of Understanding*, Unpublished, January 2000

¹⁸ Corcoran, M., "The Move to Accessible Public transport - The Australian Experience" in *Conference Proceedings - Setting the Pace - 8th International Conference on Transport & Mobility for Elderly & Disabled People*, Vol. 1, Indomed Pty. Ltd. 1998

This theme is also advanced by Eltridge-Smith¹⁹ who, in arguing for improved transport access in South Australia, writes of the transport ‘chain’ - the accessible path from home to the transport mode. If the chain is inaccessible at any point then travel is unlikely to take place and hence community transport should concern itself with the whole of the chain.

To help address matters of mobility Hind and Hind²⁰ incorporate the concept of ‘transport companions’ - a volunteer companion scheme that provides support to people with a mobility need.

The Colac situation

There are many systemic transport issues facing people living in and around Colac. For example:

- Whilst there is little in the way of public transport there is a large number of community transport resources. Each of these currently operates separately from each other and the resources are largely not currently available to others in the community who could benefit from them;
- There are issues around the transport ‘chain’. These include people who might not have access to affordable transport from their home to the station and who, having arrived in Geelong, again have difficulties in getting to where they want to go;
- There are many people who use wheelchairs but the town has only one wheelchair accessible taxi and the many wheelchair accessible vehicles owned by community organisations are not available to the general public.

The views of participating key stakeholders

Participating key stakeholders expressed the view that the new model should have multiple funding sources and tap into resources widely. Key groups identified by participants include:

- local, state and commonwealth governments, e.g., Colac Otway Shire, DHS, the Department of Infrastructure, Education Department, Vic Roads, Veteran’s Affairs, HACC
- all disability service providers, including those operated by DHS, Otway Community Health Service, etc.
- all community organisations, e.g., Colac Otway Community Health Services, the Red Cross, etc.
- commercial operators, e.g., the taxi service and the various bus companies
- people from the community who might volunteer their time as drivers; and chaperones, or be willing to offer to others a shared ride in their vehicle.

¹⁹ Eltridge-Smith, T., “Fully Accessible Transport: The Importance of Appropriate Attitudes and Behaviours Within Transport Service Providers”, in *Conference Proceedings - Setting the Pace - 8th International Conference on Transport & Mobility for Elderly & Disabled People*, Vol. 1, Indomed Pty. Ltd. 1998

²⁰ Hind & Hind, 1998, op. cit.

The proposed model for the Colac Disability Services Network incorporates a systems approach through:

- *inclusion of systems advocacy in the role of the network;*
- *the identification and use of all existing transport resources and infrastructure, including the commercial sector; and*
- *a community advisory group that is comprised of all key stakeholders across the broader community.*

5.3. Coordinated system

Models and experiences from elsewhere

A coordinated transport system implies the combination of existing resources in some cooperative way, of systematic planning, of developing some schematic approach to service development and improvement. There are many examples of coordination.

Most fall within the traditional definition of community transport and coordinate one of two service delivery models – volunteer drivers using their own or agency vehicles or paid drivers using agency vehicles. Sometimes, community transport services coordinate both of these service delivery models.

Ovens and King Community Managed Transport (CMT)²¹ is an example of one such service. It provides coordinated transport to and from day services in Wangaratta for people with disabilities who live in Wangaratta, Beechworth and Myrtleford. It has both volunteer and paid drivers, using agency vehicles. In addition to this service, the CMT manager also coordinates the fleet management services for the whole of Ovens and King Community Health Service, but not the operations.

Sometimes agencies provide a coordinated transport service to their own client group as well as coordinate service planning and development for a group of community transport services. Community Accessibility Inc. in Wodonga is one such example. It directly provides coordinated transport services in and around Wodonga to traditional target groups - people with disabilities who attend day services and people eligible for Home and Community Care (HACC) services.

In addition, as part of a best practice model²² it also takes a lead role in the coordination of other HACC-related community transport services in the north east of Victoria. In this role Community Accessibility Inc. coordinates a total of ten local services across three domains:

- policy and funding;
- information, networking and training; and
- improvements to individual schemes.

²¹ Ovens & King Community Managed Transport policy documents

²² Neverauskas, D., & Mollison, W., *Rural Community Transport - A Model for HACC Best Practice in the Upper Hume Region*, Aug, 1997

Sometimes coordination is restricted to a policy and planning level. The Inner South and Coastal Community Transport Network²³ is one example of this type of coordination. It operates across five local government areas in metropolitan Melbourne. The Network, a HACC-funded service, provides overarching coordination for the traditional community transport services that operate across the region. This coordination is focused on systems planning, service development and encouraging transport operators to work more cooperatively together. It has 4 working groups:

- public transport;
- supported transport;
- coordinating services and resources/policies and standards; and
- information and education/evaluation, planning and research

Other models coordinate services within a community development approach. The Stanthorpe Community Transport Service (CTS)²⁴, like the above examples, works with the traditional HACC target group. However, as well as coordinating direct transport services it also coordinates other transport options for people, for example, contracting commercial providers, negotiating with family members, and so forth. Through its community development approach the Stanthorpe CTS is therefore able to expand the potential ‘providers’ that exist within the entire community.

Like the Stanthorpe model, the models developed by Hind and Hind²⁵ and the Queensland Best Practice²⁶ propose coordination of all transport resources in a community, but as noted previously, extend beyond the traditional community transport target groups.

Coordinated services generally incorporate a range of coordinative strategies, which can include centralised booking services; the use of common policies, procedures and standards and the sharing of vehicles. For example:

- Central Wellington Health Services in Sale has a central booking transport database funded by HACC, coordinating a fleet that is managed by local committees in 5 locations.
- Community Accessibility Inc. in Wodonga has developed a computer database that includes, among other things, a total booking system, statistical collection, tracking of client donations, volunteer hours, passenger trips and daily print outs @ driver, @ vehicle and day. This system is available for purchase.

Usually, where the coordination occurs across a number of community transport services, agencies lend their vehicles to the coordinating body in non-peak times. Sometimes the vehicles are owned by the coordinating body and contracted to community agencies during their program times. Hind and Hind²⁷ identify three fleet management options for coordinated systems:

²³ Wake, 2000, op. cit.

²⁴ Ferrier, H., *Stanthorpe Community Transport Project – Report on Needs Assessment, Program and Skills Development for a Model of Community Transport*, Stanthorpe Blue Nursing Service, May 1998

²⁵ Hind & Hind, 1998, op. cit.

²⁶ QCOSS, 1997, op. cit.

²⁷ Hind & Hind, 1998, op. cit.

- owned and managed by a community agency but lent to the coordinating body during non-peak times;
- owned by the community agency but managed by the coordinating body, with priority access negotiated for the agency’s client group; and
- owned and operated by the coordinating body, with priority access negotiated for participating agencies’ client groups.

The Colac situation

Participants provided several examples of organisations in Colac working cooperatively together for example:

- CCDA, Colac ACE, LAS and the Colac Otway Community Health Services are working cooperatively to identify the service needs of people with disabilities who are ageing;
- The Shire has recently conducted planning process with the community in relation to developing a Disability Action Plan. Several community groups and organisations participated in this.

This culture should provide a good basis for the implementation of the new model.

The views of participating key stakeholders

Participants called for collaborative approach between agencies in which resources would be shared via a coordinating entity. They called for coordination between the not-for-profit and commercial sectors. They suggested the coordinator could be responsible for:

- overseeing the arrangements for the sharing of resources;
- the provision of a booking service;
- keeping abreast of legal requirements;
- facilitating the integration of the not-for-profit and commercial sectors;
- quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Participants were eager for transport to be available 24 hours, as required.

The proposed model for the Colac Disability Services Network utilises a coordinated approach through:

- *coordinating existing resources in a variety of ways;*
- *including systematic planning as part of the role of the transport network;*
- *offering a range of fleet management options;*
- *overseeing the development of good practice and common policies and procedures*
- *coordinating service planning and improvement.*

5.4. For the community

Models and experiences from elsewhere

Where community transport services provide for the broader community and not simply the traditional targeted populations, the models incorporate a role for ‘the community’. This role is most often as part of a community committee of management, an advisory group or as part of a service planning process. It might also be through members of the community participating in aspects of the service, for example as volunteer drivers or volunteer transport companions or chaperones.

As indicated previously, a number of the models include a community advisory group and are governed by a community-based organisation.

The Queensland Best Practice model states that the “...involvement of a range of people serves to increase the pool of expertise and knowledge which can be used by the CTC. It also provides a valuable entry point to numerous informal networks that exist within every community and also connects the groups to various Government Departments.”²⁸

The Colac situation

Colac is not a large town in terms of population from which to draw members for local committees of management. There are a range of existing agencies with good levels of infrastructure and experience that could potentially provide the management and administration of a new coordinated system. This is likely to be a better option than establishing a new committee of management.

The views of participating key stakeholders

Participants expressed the view that a community transport system should be managed by a community-based organisation that had input from all key stakeholders – services users, not-for-profit and commercial operators, funding bodies and community groups.

They also expressed the view that although the model should have a staged implementation it would be best for a wide range of providers and service users to be included from the outset.

The proposed model for the Colac Disability Services Network suggests that the transport network be auspiced and governed by an existing community-based organisation. It also includes a community advisory group comprised of a wide range of key stakeholders.

5.5. Sustainable

²⁸ QCOSS, 1997, op. Cit. Pg. 11

Models and experiences from elsewhere

For purposes of this report, the proposed model would be sustainable if:

- key stakeholders support it in principle;
- it is financially viable;
- key stakeholders commit time, energies and resources to its implementation;
- it can be justified through achieving improved outcomes for clients and greater efficiencies for agencies.

Ashby et al²⁹ report on a research project that found schemes should start from a small base, then grow to a regional level. This assists in ensuring viability.

These same authors also found, in their extensive literature review, that a well-coordinated service results in “improved accessibility, financial and time savings, improved service quality and the opportunity for centralised vehicle management/control.”³⁰ This research suggests that efficiencies can be achieved.

Few of the models explored operate outside Monday to Friday. Access to affordable transport after hours is likely to achieve significant user outcomes. Services using a community development approach (Stanthorpe, South Australia Passenger Transport Network, Queensland Best Practice model and Hinds’ La Trobe Valley model) are more likely to focus on after hours and other user outcomes.

The Colac situation

Whilst agencies expend significant amounts of money on the provision of transport it is currently focused on specific clients and activities. Some of the resources will be readily realised for pooling into a common system, however some are tied to salaries of people who undertake transport-related duties as a part of their overall role. Some of these resources therefore might only be realised over time and with dedicated strategic planning.

There are currently no resources for the people who fall in the broader definition and conceptual framework. Likewise there are currently no resources for coordinating transport for people with disabilities after hours. Therefore, implementation of the model, in its entirety, would require additional resources.

The views of participating key stakeholders

Each of the five disability agencies that have participated in this project has indicated an interest and willingness to commit time, energy and resources to the model, which was developed collaboratively with them. They have suggested an initial input from

²⁹ Ashby et al, 1997, op. cit.

³⁰ Ibid. pg. 43

them could be around coordinating the transport that occurs to and from their centres. The need for after hours access to affordable transport was a recurring theme throughout this project.

The proposed model provides the overall framework. A gradual implementation is suggested; embarking firstly upon those aspects of the system that are possible through the redirection of existing resources. As part of the implementation schedule the participating agencies should develop a set of outcome and efficiency performance measurements and ensure ongoing review. A focus on meeting the after hours needs, as a priority, would result in improved access and outcomes for clients. This has been included in the concept. Community development is a key approach for the model.

5.6. Flexible

Models and experiences from elsewhere

A search of the literature and exploration of other models suggest that flexibility, in relation to community transport, means:

- a capacity and willingness for agencies to cooperate through the use of common operating systems;
- addressing people’s transport needs through a variety of ways; and
- a capacity and willingness to review and adapt the way in which services are delivered.

Note an extended sample of the variety of service delivery responses is provided in Appendix 3.

A report³¹ of a study undertaken in the Loddon Mallee region recommended that a variety of models be implemented in the region. These included expanding volunteer transport schemes, integrating bus services between HACC and commercial operators, transport brokerage and improved public transport through coordinating fixed route timetables and community transport.

The Queensland Best Practice model³² states the CTC “...looks at clients transport needs in relation to their desired lifestyle. This will mean the role of the CTC will vary depending on the individual’s needs.” It notes a range of roles for the CTC, not only the provision of transport. These roles could include information giving, networking, linking, negotiating, contracting, advocating and lobbying. It encourages the development and use of a variety of service delivery options including:

- contracting existing services;
- Dial-a-ride services;
- Modification of schedule, route-based services;
- Shuttle services;
- Shared ride.

³¹ Budge, T., Robb, D., Fyffe, C., McCubbery, J., Hogan, J., & O’Brien, A., *Home and Community Care Transport Strategy – Loddon Mallee Region*, DHS, May 1998

³² QCOSS, 1997, op. Cit. Pg. 11

This document of best practice also advocates a community development approach as a way of better matching the means of transport with a person's needs. A similar approach is used in the Stanthorpe model³³ and in the South Australian Passenger Transport Networks.³⁴

Operators and system coordinators must also be prepared to review and adapt. David Denmark³⁵, in writing about community transport in NSW, advocates for the quality of transport to focus on client outcomes. He calls for criteria to be established in conjunction with users and believes that in doing so operators will develop a better understanding of users' needs. In this way services can be modified to better meet people's needs.

The Colac situation

As discussed previously there are many transport services operated by agencies for their own clients. Each operates on a relatively isolated basis and there is limited flexibility within each service. A conceptual shift will be required by all participants in achieving a more flexible, responsive service system.

The views of participating key stakeholders

As noted previously, participating agencies have indicated a capacity and willingness to cooperate through the use of common operating systems. During the workshop, participants identified the importance for ongoing evaluation of any new system and the need to build this at the beginning.

The proposed model for the Colac Disability Services Network is capable of incorporating a variety of service delivery responses and these are critical to the model if it is meet its underlying principles:

- *People need suitable transport and mobility assistance to enable them to participate in the life of the community; and*
- *Service delivery options should match a person's individual needs.*

Flexibility is also enhanced through systems advocacy and the community advisory group's role in continuing development and improvement of the system.

5.7. Coherent

Models and experiences from elsewhere

For the purposes of this study coherency has been defined as:

- appropriate to Colac, the participating agencies and the clients; and

³³ Ferrier, H., 1998, op. cit.

³⁴ Sciens Consulting, *A Step by Step Guide to Establishing a Rural Community Passenger Network*, Passenger Transport Board, 1998

³⁵ Denmark, D., "Performance Measurement in Community Transport", in *Conference Proceedings - Setting the Pace - 8th International Conference on Transport & Mobility for Elderly & Disabled People*, Vol. 2, Indomed Pty. Ltd. 1998

- a cooperative and common operating system

Budge et al³⁶, in looking at the Loddon Mallee region, recommended a range of service delivery models, each suiting the different demographics and particular situations of the various areas.

Examples of cooperative and common operating systems have been identified in earlier points.

The Colac situation

Colac has a high number of people who require transport to and from disability day services, too many to be adequately catered for by the local taxi service as occurs in Geelong. The high numbers also mean there is a high demand for transport during program time, again too great to rely on the local taxi service. Service responses that continue to use the many community buses are likely to be essential.

The views of participating key stakeholders

The disability day service agency participants expressed a strong view that access to transport during program time is essential. They also expressed a preference for them to have a degree of autonomy over this part of the service delivery system.

The proposed model for the Colac Disability Services Network has been developed collaboratively with key stakeholders so should reflect the particular local situation.

³⁶ Budge et al, 1998, op. cit.

6. The model

As stated elsewhere, the brief was to develop a model for the disability day service sector that has capacity to broaden to the general community. The model is therefore presented here in a table form, showing the primary and expanded models beside each other for easy comparison.

Table 4: The proposed model

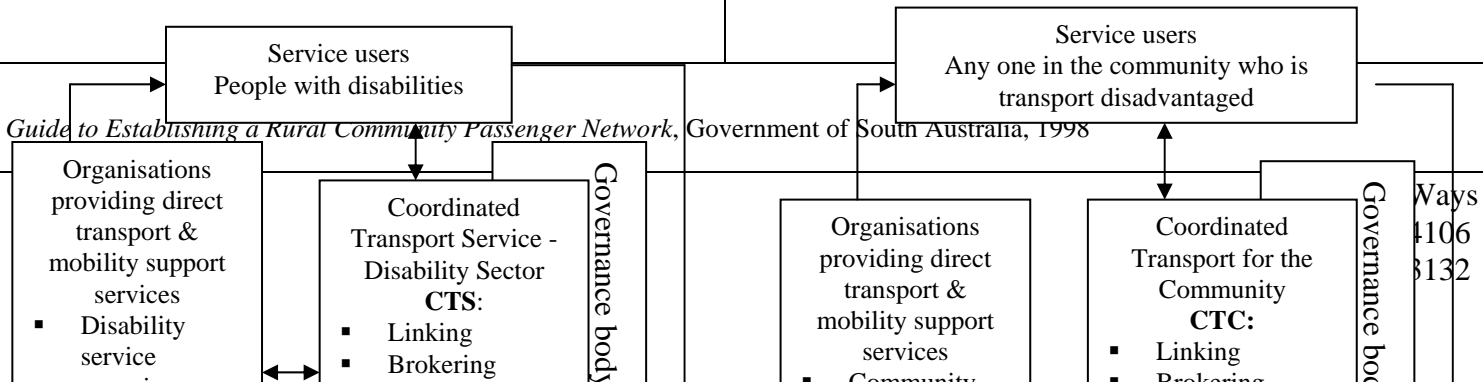
	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
6.1. Description	A coordinated transport system for people with a disability	A coordinated transport system for the community
6.2. Target group	Service users of disability service agencies in Colac.	Any person in the Colac and districts community who does not have access (for whatever reasons) to adequate transport ³⁷ .
6.3. Underlying principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities need suitable transport and mobility assistance to enable them to participate in the life of the community; • Service delivery options should match a person's individual needs and desired lifestyle; • Integration in the community will be enhanced if the services used are also integrated • People with disabilities should have an active role (directly or through an advocate) in the management of the system • Community transport is a community infrastructure issue • Community transport should be part of the broader transport system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people need suitable transport and mobility assistance to enable them to participate in the life of the community; • Service delivery options should match a person's individual needs and desired lifestyle; • The community should have an active role in the management of the system • Community transport is a community infrastructure issue • Community transport should be part of the broader transport system

³⁷ Definition from Queensland Best Practice model – Coordinated Transport for the Community

Community Transport System – Colac Disability Services Network

	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
6.4. Approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An approach centred on the service user – this means that the Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector & the Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC) take an individual approach to the transport & mobility needs of the service user. Service delivery options are varied and flexible to reflect the desired lifestyle of the service user 2. A community development approach underpins the CTS and CTC – this means taking an “...approach to ‘helping’ the community to develop its skills, resources & quality of life...Community development is all about encouraging and assisting a community help itself.”³⁸ 	
6.5. Governance	<p>The CTS for the Disability Services Sector is managed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an existing disability service agency; or • a lead agency as part of a consortium of disability agencies; or • as lead agency as part of a partnership with 1 or more commercial &/or not-for profit organisations <p>It has an advisory committee comprising representatives of all participating agencies, users &/or their advocates, DHS, commercial operators.</p>	<p>The CTC is managed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an existing organisation, preferably one with a community-wide mandate; or • as lead agency as part of a consortium or partnership with 1 or more commercial &/or not-for profit organisations <p>It has an advisory committee comprising representatives of all participating agencies, users &/or their advocates, funding bodies, the Shire, commercial operators, community groups</p>
6.6. Structure		

³⁸ Sciens Consulting, *A Step-by-Step Guide to Establishing a Rural Community Passenger Network*, Government of South Australia, 1998



	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)

	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
<p>6.7. Functions of the system</p>	<p>i. Linking people to existing services, programs and aids Some people might only need information about an existing service, concession schemes, timetable information, etc. Others might require assistance with mobility. Linking them to this support might include referring them to an appropriate issue centre for aids and equipment. It might mean referral to an organisation that provides volunteer support such as a transport companion or chaperone.</p> <p>ii. Brokering The CTS or the CTC might broker particular arrangements for individuals or groups of people. These arrangements might involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Purchasing a service from a commercial &/or not-for profit operator through discretionary funds; – Negotiating an alteration in the way an existing service is provided by commercial &/or not-for profit operator ; – Helping commercial & not-for profit operators develop a new service; – Negotiating contracted services with commercial & not-for profit operator providers; – Negotiating access to volunteer services that provide transport companions or chaperones. <p>iii. Coordination The CTS or CTC would be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Liaising between service providers (not-for-profit and commercial) and ensuring various services keep in touch with each other; – Provision of support and advice to all transport providers; – Developing common policies and procedures; – Facilitating interagency collaboration; – Promoting good practice; – Maintaining a transport service resource register; – Planning; – Evaluation; and – Continuous quality improvement 	

	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
Functions of the system [continued]	<p>iv. Systems advocacy The CTS or CTC plays an important role in looking at the transport need and taking action to help address these. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lobbying local, state and commonwealth governments; – Working with a service provider to develop a new service; – Research and development; – Providing community education and information about how to improve access and mobility; – Facilitating local strategic transport planning; – Input to regional strategic transport planning; – Advising providers, government departments & relevant others of barriers & issues that impede transport & mobility – Working with the community advisory committee to find local systems solutions to identified barriers & issues 	

	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
<p>Functions of the system [continued]</p>	<p>v. Provision of transport and mobility assistance Where an existing service cannot be modified to meet a need, where no other services exist or where they cannot be purchased, the CTS or CTC would provide the transport. Such provision could be provided in a number of ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Using an agency vehicle; – Using a vehicle from another organisation – Using a volunteer’s vehicle; – Using a client’s vehicle <p>When providing direct service, the roles would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Client service [intake, assessment of transport needs and booking]; – Negotiating, maintaining and monitoring contractual arrangements with service providers; – Ensuring the service has the appropriate technical equipment; – Fleet management [purchasing/leasing of vehicles, insurance, servicing and maintenance, cleaning, safety, administration, adherence to relevant regulations, quality assurance]; – Dispatch [knowledge of routes, matching of client needs with transport on the ground, maintaining dispatch system]; – Management of staff and volunteers. <p><i>Note: The CTS & the CTC lead agency need not provide this service – it might:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Provide this service via a partnership agreement with another organisation (commercial &/or not-for-profit);</i> – <i>Ensure all direct service is provided via contract arrangements as part of the brokering functions</i> 	

	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
6.8. Skills	<p>The breadth of functions of the CTS or CTC is such that it is unlikely that a single person could appropriately undertake all roles. The CTS or CTC might achieve this breadth by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Employing part time people for particular aspects of the system, e.g., a part time coordinator to undertake the systems advocacy, coordination and brokerage functions, a part time administrative officer to undertake the linking function & some of the duties associated with direct service provision such as the bookings, a part time person to manage the direct service provision. Some part of this employment might be outside regular working hours, e.g., on the weekend, to allow for after-hours service. – Partnering with, or contracting to, another organisation with particular expertise, e.g., The CTS or CTC might decide it does not want to undertake direct service provision so enters a partnership with a commercial operator to manage part of the direct service provision and contracts or brokers the remaining direct services via community organisations. 	
6.9. Participating organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Colac based agencies in receipt of state or commonwealth disability services funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any community organisation that currently provides community transport (directly or indirectly) ▪ Any local, state or commonwealth agency that provides community transport (directly or indirectly)

	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
<p>6.10 Fleet options</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fleet owned and operated by individual agencies but contracted to the CTS or CTC during non-peak or non-program times. Individual agencies remain responsible for all fleet functions. Agencies recoup overhead costs from the CTS or CTC & the users if their vehicles are used, as per negotiated contract. The individual agency operates its own transport during peak/program times. Vehicles are garaged, as per negotiated contract. 2. Fleet owned by the individual agencies but managed by the CTS or CTC. Agencies retain ownership of vehicles and remain responsible for all fleet functions unless otherwise negotiated. Agencies recoup the overhead costs from the CTS or CTC & service users, as per negotiated contract. CTS or CTC pools vehicles and coordinates usage. Individual agencies negotiate priority access for their client group, and perhaps their staff. Vehicles remain garaged at site(s) of owner or at an alternative site, as negotiated. 3. Fleet owned and operated by the CTS or CTC. Individual agencies sign over or sell the fleet. Agencies negotiate priority access to the vehicle for their clients, and perhaps their staff. The CTS or CTC becomes responsible for all fleet functions. It recoups the overhead costs from the individual agencies and service users. <p>In each of the above options it will be critical for the issues of ownership, maintenance and replacement to be addressed in the contracts. Ovens & King Community Health Service’s Community Managed Transport has addressed this issue by transferring ownership from participating agencies to itself. This was done over time & through negotiation with agencies and DHS. At least 2 of the Colac disability services have experience in contracting their vehicles to other organisations via a written agreement. The experiences of these agencies would assist the CTS & CTC.</p>	

	A Coordinated Transport Service (CTS) for the Disability Services Sector	Coordinated Transport for the Community (CTC)
6.11. Funding sources	<p>1. From participating agencies – all, or some, of the resources currently used by the agencies for transporting clients, depending on the level of service negotiated with the CTS.</p> <p>2. From the service user on a per kilometre rate.</p> <p><i>Ovens & King Community Managed Transport scheme is funded for total cost recovery using the above-mentioned sources of funding. Agencies contribute a percentage of the Unit Cost Funding & Futures For Young Adults (FFYA) resources. A formula, based on distance and program time, is used to determine the percentage. Clients contribute on a per kilometre rate, with an upper limit.³⁹</i></p>	<p>1. From participating agencies – all, or some, of the resources currently used by the agency for transporting clients, depending on the level of service negotiated with the CTC.</p> <p>2. From the service user on a per kilometre rate.</p> <p>3. From local, state or commonwealth government agencies</p> <p>4. From community organisations</p> <p>5. From charitable organisations</p>

³⁹ Ovens & King CMT is currently documenting its service model, including its formula for funding. This will be available for purchase - (03) 5722 2355

6.12. How does the model differ from the current situation?

The proposed model differs from the current situation in a number of ways. These are outlined in *Table 5*.

Table 5: A summary of the differences between the proposed model and the current situation

	Proposed model	Current situation
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transport is a community infrastructure issue – The disability services system has a joint responsibility to solve access-related issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transport is a welfare issue – Day service agencies have sole responsibility
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provision of transport by agencies is the provision of last resort – Transport solutions are developed through a community development approach – Solutions are varied and many 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provision of transport by agencies is first response – Solutions are limited mainly to providing transport using agency owned vehicles and agency staff
Interface with community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Disability transport system is the base for developing a community-wide system – Disability provides significant social value through sharing its resources – Increases future possibilities for people with disabilities to be integrated in their communities because the transport is integrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transport is separate from community – Does not advance integration of people with disabilities in their communities other than enable people to access communities activities
Core business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enables agencies to concentrate on their core business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agencies are distracted from their core business
Efficiencies & savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Efficiencies are made by directing energies to core business – Potential savings might come from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – moving toward partial use of volunteer drivers &/or travel companions; – sharing costs of commuting transport with accommodation support services; – freeing up staff &/or vehicles as other options are developed; – rationalisation of fleet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A few shared arrangements between agencies commuting long distances
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Potential for multiple funding sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DHS
Client outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Potential for greater independence – Potential for accessible transport after-hours – Potential for additional resources for programs and associated supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Access to day services

7. Implementation

7.1. Implementation issues

A staged implementation

There is a need to develop a shared vision for the longer-term, translating it into a suitable community transport plan. The plan should include a mission statement and short-term, mid term and longer-term goals and objectives as well as an outline of the stages of development.

As a minimum, agencies should agree to coordinate commuting transport. In the short-term agencies could retain ownership of vehicles but pool them. Agencies should plan to implement this level of coordination in time for 2001.

Agencies should also focus community development efforts on finding ways to enable after hours transport. In this way actual outcomes for clients can be achieved.

Gaining support of all key stakeholders

The steering committee has expressed a preference to move immediately to a community-wide transport model. It will therefore be essential to engage the Shire in the early planning stages. Further, a community education and marketing strategy should be developed in conjunction with the Shire to ensure people throughout the community and the business sector comes to understand the model and how it will apply in Colac.

Several coordination strategies rely on the support and cooperation of Colanda Residential Services. Including Colanda in the next phases will be essential.

Whilst the model has been developed following consultation with service users and their families and the client advocate was involved in the workshops it will be necessary to maintain their involvement. The community education and marketing strategy should ensure that:

- Current service users, their families and carers and the client advocate are involved in the planning process; and
- Current service users are made aware of the commitment of the disability agencies to continuing to support their transport needs;

Operational issues

Vehicles

There will be a need to identify and solve operational issues related to the pooling of vehicles:

- What vehicle insurance will be required?
- What should be included in written agreements?
- What happens in the event of an accident?

- Clarification of Work Cover issues for agency staff who drive vehicles for the coordinated scheme.
- Discuss and explore issues related to replacement of vehicles. For example: How will replacement occur? How will it be funded? When it is time to replace, will new vehicles be purchased or will a lease be taken out or will the vehicle be sold to help liquidate resources?
- Decide on whether vehicles remain in the pool permanently or return to owners at conclusion of commuting runs.
- Where will vehicles be garaged?

Coordination

There will be a need to decide on how the scheme will operate. Coordination of commuting transport is likely to warrant a 0.6 coordinating position. This person should be a logistic person to operate the bookings, vehicle scheduling, etc.

A further 0.2 for the community development function would be an advantage. It would be best if this position is filled by a different person who focuses on:

- Working with the commercial sector;
- Working with the broader community;
- Developing options that provide commuting strategies that free up program staff;
- Developing options that begin to free agencies from being asset dependent.

Financing

Salaries and associated on-costs plus administrative overheads for the 2 coordinating positions should be costed and funded by agencies purchasing into the scheme on a pro rata basis, e.g. \$X for Y clients.

Agencies should identify these dollars in their global budgets and set out strategies and timelines to liquidate an appropriate and agreed level of resources. As noted elsewhere it might not be easy for agencies to readily liquidate resources to purchase in to the coordinated scheme. It might therefore be necessary in the short-term to:

- Purchase via 'in-kind', e.g., continuing to make staff available for bus runs until resources are liquidated or other driver or chaperone arrangements are developed by the coordinator;
- Purchase coordination via 'in-kind', e.g., agencies take pro rata turn in providing the coordination, such as one term for X clients; or
- Obtain seeding funds.

A common pricing structure for clients should be developed. Explore what other schemes do, particularly what other ATSS do in community transport schemes, e.g., O&K CMT uses a graduated fee based on distance, Wodonga CMT uses a flat fee per EFT.

Repeatedly throughout the project many participants raised concern about client fees based on distance because of how this can greatly disadvantage people who live in more rural and remote areas. Develop the client pricing in consultation with the client advocate, Colanda staff, community-based accommodation support services and parent groups, keeping in mind the concerns that have been raised.

For the short-term coordination of commuting transport, clarify the logistics. Identify the number of clients, routes and number of seats required each morning and afternoon. Match the vehicles to the commuting needs to make efficient use of vehicles.

Drivers and chaperones

Clarify who will drive the vehicles and be chaperones, at least in the short-term. Negotiate how this will happen.

Identify and resolve industrial and employment issues. Schedule drivers so there is consistency for clients. For example in the short-term program staff might continue to drive but be 'lent' to the coordinator for the bus runs. Agreements outlining roles, responsibilities, lines of communication and accountability, employment status, conditions, etc. would need to be negotiated.

Assistance with logistics

Explore with other schemes particular management systems. For example Wodonga CMT sells a computer data base system for scheduling of vehicles, drivers, etc and Inner South and Coastal Community Transport Network has developed a vehicle register database. Identify costs and budget.

Develop appropriate policies. Explore what other schemes have, e.g., Wodonga CMT advises it has a policy manual for sale.

Management

There will be a need to consider how the system will be managed. Decide on the governance structure. In the short term it might make sense for one of the agencies to host the scheme, at least during the development phase. Explore possible longer-term governance options.

Efficiencies and savings

More efficient use of assets

The pooling of vehicles permanently rather than just for commuting times has the advantage of enabling agencies to have access to the whole fleet and match it more closely to their needs. They can 'hire' the vehicles that best suit their program needs at any particular time. For example an agency might need 2 X 12 seater buses one day but 3 sedans and a 22 seater the next.

Being asset dependent means that agencies have limited opportunities to make efficiencies and savings. Discuss and explore how agencies can move from being vehicle dependent. What other ways can program access occur? How many and what type of vehicles do agencies need for programs? Pooling of vehicles permanently might enable the system to more clearly identify surplus vehicles. This could lead to decisions to sell particular vehicles and thus liquidate some resources.

Develop a short-term, mid-term and longer-term vehicle plan for the system.

Changing practices

Identify clients who need chaperones. Explore possibility of economies of scale by placing these clients in same vehicles. Develop longer-term plan to review the chaperone needs for each of these clients with their family/carer and the client advocate. Explore other strategies that might work in the mid and long-term to reduce the need for a chaperone.

Over time review the transport needs of all clients, developing strategies that seek to achieve greater levels of independence. For some people this might mean independent travel, for others it might mean reducing the need for a chaperone.

Explore options with commercial operators. Explore issues of training, how consistency for clients be achieved, etc.

The use of volunteers can greatly enhance and complement the system. In many schemes, e.g., Ballarat, O&K CMT and Wodonga CMT, all, or most, transport occurs through the use of volunteer drivers. In Colac, because of the number and needs of clients and the need to further develop and strengthen volunteering programs, it is not expected that this would be case, especially in the short to mid term.

Identify how, when and where volunteers might be used, e.g., driving some clients, out-of-hours support, travel companions. Explore with other schemes what training they use, how they achieve consistency for clients, etc.

Budgets

Agencies should begin to identify and monitor actual transport costs they expend.

7.2. Key implementation tasks

Key step	Issues to consider	Responsibility	Progress indicators
Establish a working group to oversee initial stages of a program development phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This working group should operate in the initial stages only, with the work being transferred to the Community Advisory Group once is established. Colanda, the Shire, DHS community-based accommodation services and the client advocate should be included in the working group 	CEOs Colanda CEO, Sector Manager DHS, the client advocate & the Shire’s Manager Health & Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working group established & goals being achieved
Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between disability service agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing network agencies indicated a preference that this task be purchased and facilitated by an external person, as part of a program development phase. 	CEOs, Chairpersons of management committees, and relevant managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Memorandum of Understanding developed
Develop an implementation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from key stakeholders could ensure all issues are addressed in the plan 	CEOs with key stakeholders – perhaps conducted by a facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan developed
Identify necessary resources to conduct program development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possibilities to explore include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grant from DHS – Ministerial grant – Sharing of cost by agencies on an agreed formula 	CEOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultant or other facilitator engaged

Community Transport System – Colac Disability Services Network

Key step	Issues to consider	Responsibility	Progress indicators
Brief key stakeholders of model – both internal & external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide committees of management & staff time to discuss & understand the commitments & implications ▪ Identify concerns of stakeholders & possible solutions to address these ▪ Reassure service users of continuing service ▪ Consider briefing the Minister as part of gaining wider commitment ▪ Brief Shire, commercial operators & other community organisations & invite their participation on the Community Advisory Group ▪ Identify ways in which clients can participate, or be represented, on the Community Advisory Group 	CEOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DHS' commitment to model ▪ All key stakeholders advised ▪ Committees of management committed
Explore the operational aspects of similar community transport services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning from the experiences of other services can improve the implementation ▪ Consider whether the exploration is 'on-site' or via presentations to the planning group ▪ Identify the technology that could support the CTS 	The working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific ideas & strategies for use in Colac identified

Key step	Issues to consider	Responsibility	Progress indicators
Identify resources from disability agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all client transport resources can be easily realised. – Transfer of resources might have human resource and industrial implications For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ some staff undertake client transport as part of a broader role ▪ where dedicated drivers and chaperones are employed. – Client transport to and from the centres is often done at the expense of programs. Agencies might want to redirect some of these resources to programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agencies should identify all associated resources & develop a plan for the transfer that accounts for particular agency issues [such as in the above point] 	CEO's & Finance Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource transfer plan developed by each agency
Clarify degree of coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploration of how other systems pool fleet could assist the agencies decide if this is to be a feature of the first stage⁴⁰ 	CEOs & Committees of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree of coordination agreed upon
Identify the host organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarify role & responsibilities of host organisation ▪ Disability agencies enter contractual arrangement with host organisation 	CEOs Committees of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host agency 'engaged'

⁴⁰ Ovens & King CMT has a contracted arrangement with day services, e.g., CMT owns & manages the fleet and undertakes commuting transport. Agencies have use of the vehicles during program time. They contribute a % of the Unit Cost [based on a formula] and are entitled to 25 000 'free' kilometres per year. Additional kilometres accrue an additional charge

Community Transport System – Colac Disability Services Network

Key step	Issues to consider	Responsibility	Progress indicators
Establish Community Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all key stakeholders are represented ▪ Develop terms of reference 	Initially CEOs & then agreed chairperson of planning forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A formal planning process established & implemented ▪ All disability service agencies an active part of the planning forum
Establish strategic plan for the CTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate purpose, mission, aims & objectives and financial plan • Ensure culture & values are well articulated • Identify ways in which the CTS can coordinate after-hours access to transport 	Host organisation with Community Advisory Group - perhaps conducted by a facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan developed
Develop infrastructure for CTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include physical, management & cultural infrastructure ▪ Develop position descriptions • Decide on fee structure for clients ▪ Develop operational plan 	Planning group/host organisation/ Community advisory group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roles & responsibilities clarified ▪ HR requirements in place ▪ Host agency & advisory group agreed upon culture of CTS ▪ Fee structure agreed ▪ Operational plan developed

Key step	Issues to consider	Responsibility	Progress indicators
Implement operational plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure plan contains change management strategies around key areas of concern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agencies indicated that the use of program staff as drivers and chaperones means the clients are transported by people with whom they are familiar and who understand their needs. This same degree of familiarity will need to be developed if coordination alters the existing arrangements – Matching/mapping in relation to transport runs to occur with residential services staff – There is a need to address some of the poor perceptions of taxis – develop strategies in conjunction with the taxi company 	CTS coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicators developed & achieved in accordance with operational plan

Members of the steering committee

Gary	Alexander	Karingal COS (Joined committee near completion of project)
Robyn	Bradshaw	Karingal COS
Neil	Brooks	LAS
Julia	Currell	Karingal COS (Left organisation & replaced by Robyn Bradshaw)
Alan	Faulkner	St. Laurence (Replaced N. Brooks - LAS merged with St. Laurence)
Maria	Fraser	Karingal COS (Joined committee at same time as Robyn Bradshaw)
Ted	Gower	Colac ACE
Kaye	Lont	DHS (Transferred during the project and replaced by Kerrie Mansell)
Kerrie	Mansell	DHS
Kathryn	McBride	LAS
Peter	McDonald	DHS (Left DHS during the project and replaced by Kaye Lont)
Bernadette	O'Connor	Colac ACE
Noel	Ryan	CCDA
Trevor	Schenk	CCDA
Jacqui	Suares	CODA
Geoff	Wallace	CODA

Organisations and people consulted

Euny	Anson	CODA
Cliff	Barley	Colac ACE
Joy	Bishop	Colac ACE
Grant	Boyd	Gateway
Marita	Brady	CODA
Paul	Brady	Colac Otway Regional Advocacy Service
Neil	Brooks	LAS
Lloyd	Brunt	CODA
Russell	Cameron	CCDA
Sally	Clarke	ADASS
Jennine	Clifford	Colac ACE
Amy	Cole	LAS
Kerry	Colville	Colac ACE
Julia	Currell	Karingal Colac Otway Services
Rob	Davis	Colac Otway Shire
June	Day	Interchange
Rhonda	Deigan	CODA
Peter	Falkiner	Colac ACE
Denise	Feldman	Gateway Support Services
Greg	Fletcher	Colac Otway Shire
Alan	Fluker	St Laurence
Peter	Garbolini	Victorian Taxi Association
Ted	Gower	Colac ACE
Tony	Graham	Barwon Psychiatric Resource Centre
Michael	Harrison	Active Taxis Colac
Steve	Kelly	DHS (Colanda)
Greg	Kent	DHS (Colanda)
Frank	Kervin	CCDA
Kaye	Lont	DHS
Robert	Loricco	CCDA
Barb	MacBryde	LAS
Peter	MacDonald	Colac ACE
Kerrie	Mansell	DHS
Bev	Martin	CCDA
Kathryn	McBride	LAS
Ross	McBride	CCDA
Pat	McCabb	LAS
Peter	McDonald	DHS
Bernie	McIntosh	O&K CMT
Ian	McMillan	LAS
Wanda	McNamara	Colac ACE
Jo	Morrissy	CCDA
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Community Transport System – Colac Disability Services Network

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Norma	O'Neill	LAS
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Kaz	Paton	Colac Otway Shire
Gael	Perry	Colac Otway Shire
Kathy	Pierce	DHS (Colanda)
Jenny	Porter	Karingal Colac Otway Services
Freyda	Purdy	CODA
Gina	Richens	CODA
Bruce	Roberts	CODA
Iris	Roberts	DHS
Jean	Rooney	DHS
Shirley	Rutherford	Colac Otway Community Health Services
Noel	Ryan	CCDA
Genevieve	Saunders	Colac ACE
Dave	Savin	CODA
Trevor	Schenk	CCDA
Paul	Schroeder	DHS (Colanda)
Carolyn	Sinclair	DHS
Jacqui	Suares	CODA
Charmaine	Summers	Colac ACE
Stephanie	Sutherland	Colac ACE
Deanne	Van der Waal	CODA
Brett	Wake	Inner South & Coastal Community Transport
Geoff	Wallace	CODA
Marg	Walsh	DHS (Colanda)

Merryn from Colac Otway Health Service

Maria, Geoff and Susan from Karingal Colac Otway Services

Staff from LAS

Client and family representatives of agencies participated in forums as part of the consultation process.

Service delivery examples

- Contracting existing services - transport is for organised groups, trips that are planned and regular or where the travel occurs during off peak times
- Dial-a-ride services - individuals or groups pre-book door-to-door transport. This service delivery option is good for people with specialised needs, where travel is irregular, one-off, or to out of the way destinations or where there is insufficient need to support regular, scheduled services
- Modification of schedule, route-based services - for people with the physical skills and ability to access public transport options
- Shuttle services - a vehicle regularly travels between two points for groups of people with a common need or destination
- Shared ride - cars are pooled; taxis are shared, etc. so that people who are going in the same direction can share a vehicle. This can be useful for people who want to travel at approximately the same time and where the population and demand is too small to support regular schedules or dial-a-ride services
- Medi-ride - door-to-door medical transportation in Colac, to Geelong or Melbourne
- Linklift – matching people in car pooling arrangements
- Connector service – connection to regular passenger services
- Job rides – charter services to transport workers to job sites in consultation with employees & employers, particularly for destinations/job situations that are seasonal

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