

Meeting Minutes from Regional Gathering of Northern Rivers Transport Working Groups

A Northern Rivers Transport Development Project (TDP), funded by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and delivered by Social Futures.

Date: Tuesday 3 March 2020 **Time:** 10am - 1pm. **Where:** Lismore City Hall, Lismore.

Attendees: Robert Weatherby (Southern Cross University), Terra Sword (Lismore City Council), Adam Guise (NNSW LHD Health Promotion), Danika Head (Southern Cross University), Jodi Morriss (Richmond Valley Volunteer Health Transport Inc), Helen Carpenter (Ballina Shire Council), Alana Brooks (Tweed Shire Council), Geoff Ferris (Northern Rivers/Ballina Buslines), Dene Petty (Northern Rivers/Ballina Buslines), Andrew Pearce (Byron Shire Council), Monique Pollock (Tweed, Byron & Ballina Community Transport), Kim Wilson (Tweed Shire Council), Giselle Benitez (Tweed Shire Council), Dan Griffin (Clarence Valley Council), Benny Saunders (Lismodo), Ronny Susanto (Transport representative for Janelle Saffin's Office), Laurel Rogers (NNSW LHD – Aboriginal Health), Ross Chalmers (TfNSW), Mal Britt (Busways), Aunty Lilian King (Bundjalung Elder), Gary Shallala-Hudson (Social Futures – LAC Team), Matt Spruce (TfNSW), Arnab Roy (TfNSW), Ben Dawson (TfNSW), Ken Smith (Kyogle Bus Company), Kon Papadopoulos (North Coast Limousines), Jahdon Quinlan (Social Futures – Opportunity Pathways), David Kapeen (Tweed, Byron & Ballina Community Transport), Col Humphreys (Transport representative for Chris Gulaptis)

Event supported by Social Futures staff: Linda Wirf, Katrina Ross, Ian O'Reilly, Glenn Bailey and Siobhan Coughlan.

Time	Item	Key Points noted
10:00	Welcome to Country	Aunty Lilian King welcomed everyone to Bundjalung Country
10:05	Overview	
10:10	Introductions and desired outcomes for the day	<p>Glenn Bailey: Encourage keeping it real and open curiosity. All questions are valid. May not be able to resolve or do all questions justice today – some follow up may be required from attendees.</p> <p>Ben Dawson: would like people to understand what we do in TfNSW contract management, including work we do with community.</p> <p>Laurel Rogers: learn what transport is available so we can let the community know – because we have transport disadvantaged people who don't have transport or can't get to bus stops, etc. Want to learn how people can get some affordable transport.</p> <p>Robert Weatherby: why no bike racks on buses in NSW especially in regional areas, what are the blockages? ACT has them. Need a sustainable solution supported by TfNSW and OPAL card extended to regional areas.</p>

		<p>Northern Rivers Buslines: School buses are our main business - buses sit empty after 9:30am. Curious in community feedback as to where demand is - need to know issues, where gaps are, targeted routes. Getting information out to community- eg all day tickets (like RED but for non-concession)</p> <p>Kim Wilson – what are the challenges, opportunities, barriers and solutions? How can we link operational and strategic issues and activities?</p> <p>Benny Saunders: wants to share she started independent ride service LISMODO. Registered for point to point service.</p> <p>Gary Shalala-Hudson: interested in creative thinking that occurs in addressing transport disadvantage and any unique solutions from other transport working groups and communities.</p> <p>General: curious how we can respond to need with very easy wins. How can we make better use of unused capacity in the transport system? Keen to hear from groups across the region about solutions and gaps.</p>
10:30	Acknowledging 'parked' questions or themes already present in the group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Query if the new regional seniors travel card can be used on community transport? (Contact specific provider as answer may vary depending on EFTPOS facilities.) How widely will the regional seniors travel card be promoted? 2) Comment suggesting service gap for NSW residents to easily access public transport with efficient linkages to reach QLD health appointments. Pressure on community transport. 3) Query regarding accessibility to NDIS transport funding for early childhood and up to 15 year olds – TDP to clarify current funding arrangements and any recent changes and consider follow up on any strategic issues. 4) Query regarding B-ConX – clarification on service for pickups (B-ConX have designated collection locations however will pick up a person at their home if they are experiencing disability. Phone B-ConX to arrange on a case by case basis.) 5) Need for transport infrastructure and connections to support health promotion of walking and cycling 6) Gap between state and local government funding transport infrastructure around schools 7) Be aware 'no child can be left behind' policy can create occasions where the bus company does not collect a fare 8) Comment that it would be useful for people in transport disadvantaged regional area to have access to bus passes and school bus timetables (TDP will explore how school bus transport information can be made more accessible.)

10:40	TfNSW: The role of North Coast Regional Manager in the Transport Development Project (TDP). General Q. & A.	<p>TfNSW North Coast Regional Manager, Ross Chalmers</p> <p>Ross acknowledged Glenn’s work pulling this unique meeting together. Ross’s work is focused on transport disadvantage, mainly through grants. Non-recurrent, with small specific groups. Social Futures has been extremely active in retaining this funding. There are only two projects remaining in the State and it’s great for the Northern Rivers. Over the last 18 months or so Ross has also been responsible for the Far West. Ross noted limited awareness of the Red Ticket. Key public transport issue is affordability.</p> <p>Other comments: Kim acknowledged the value of the TDP activity in Northern Rivers and need to support ongoing funding. (Ross remarked TDP funding is modest.)</p> <p>Monique: how can we promote community transport more to community? Encouraged the need for community service providers and transport providers to work together so people working with community can make appropriate referrals.</p> <p>Andrew shared Byron Council is currently working on integrated transport strategy – encouraged to create a dialogue between Byron Council and Arnab from TfNSW planning team.</p>
11:00	TfNSW: How can the public and transport working groups influence the creation and modification of transport routes and services? General Q. & A.	<p>TfNSW Contract Management, Matthew Spruce & Ben Dawson (Please note power point presentation is attached as a reference for attendees and is not for wider circulation. Thank you.)</p> <p>Manages Rural and regional and outer Metro bus contracts. Staff of 18. Meet regularly with bus operators- feedback, issues, and safety.</p> <p>Bus Service Alteration Request: Start with local bus operator (TfNSW eyes and ears on the ground). Consider impact of changes in the network and for existing service users. Also involves RMS, local government, private property owners (eg shopping centres). Time frame depends on scale and complexity of change.</p> <p>Implemented mystery shopping as plain clothes customers.</p> <p>Hail and ride reducing because of reality of what is a safe bus stop due to new guidelines around what is a safe stop. Safe bus stop guidelines rule out many ‘hail and ride’ locations.</p> <p>Need to look at how we communicate to regional customers – working on this. Bus operators work to what’s practical. Sometimes drivers will ask people to hail in different locations.</p>

		<p>What are you doing at a regional level with Department of Education? Will work with specific schools when they have an issue. Arnab: Engaged with Education in Tweed as part of planning work. Looking to more see more engagement with Health, Education and others.</p> <p>How can the public find school bus information for use by other members of the community. Call the school, operator or TfNSW. Some companies like Busways, NR Buslines and Surfside have their school timetables accessible via their website. School buses can be hailed from a designated bus stop. Contact your particular bus operator for specific details.</p> <p>Need to promote the single-ticketing solution for full fare-paying passengers – contact local provider. All day sectional ticket- rural and regional, across multi service providers</p>
11:20	TfNSW: Current service planning goals. General Q. & A.	<p>TfNSW Rural and Regional Planning and Development, Arnab Roy, Principal Transport and Service Planner. (Please note power point presentation is attached as a reference for attendees and is not for wider circulation. Thank you.)</p> <p>Started with mandate to explore opportunities for service planning and improvements in 2017. Problem definition happens on the ground with stakeholders and community groups.</p> <p>16 Regional Cities program – Pilot projects completed in Tweed Heads and Wagga Wagga. Next cities in Northern NSW Lismore & Grafton coming up. TfNSW keen to work with local stakeholders and community to co-develop transport solutions that best suit the community’s travel needs. The project will be undertaken in two phases: (1) Top Priority (quick wins) initiatives planned and delivered mid-late 2020, and (2) Holistic initiatives planned and delivered in a phased manner by mid-2023. While the top priority initiatives for Lismore and Grafton will be planned and delivered in 2020, Holistic planning is expected to kick off tentatively in mid-2021 and mid-2022 respectively. Lessons learnt from pilots projects as well as ongoing projects will be applied to future projects. Future Transport Strategy 2056 - https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/</p> <p>Other comments: NSW Trip Planner – responsibility of bus operators to update. (Potential action: TfNSW staff contact operators to review their information.)</p> <p>Monique: Any plans to link public transport in NSW to QLD public transport across the border to access medical and other services in QLD?</p> <p>Sky bus running empty Byron to Coolangatta \$15. Byron to Brisbane \$30.</p>

		<p>Cross border commissioner met with Aboriginal Transport Group in Tweed previously. Cross-border commissioner has also met with the Tweed Public and Active Transport Group (TPATG). TDP project to follow up and invite Aboriginal stakeholders to participate in TPATG and facilitate follow up connection with Cross-Border Commissioner.</p>
11:40	<p>What can we learn from each other? – Transport Working Group members invited to share factors behind successes and challenges of each group.</p>	<p>Arnab: valued collective input in the Tweed through the local transport working group. The Public Transport accessibility study that Alex Lewers prepared – was a great starting point for TfNSW planning.</p> <p>RSM Community Transport now known as Richmond Valley Volunteer Health Transport: Networking and referral pathways.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of Lismore Transit Centre Hub. Infrastructure that came out of the Lismore Public and Active Transport Group.</p> <p>Dave: Discussion in transport groups changed over eighteen years from why don't we do it, to how can we do it? Solutions come out of all sitting down and having a yarn together.</p> <p>Request health and education representatives in other Northern Rivers LGA transport working groups such as the Tweed. Laurel will ask Health to consider Tweed representation.</p> <p>Success getting the Byron commuter bus up and running.</p> <p>Challenge is getting active travel on the transport agenda. Infrastructure on the ground for walking and cycling, and social infrastructure such as walking school bus.</p> <p>Primary Health Network did a huge survey about health outcomes and the third or so issue was transport related. How do we get this to TfNSW? (Will share with TfNSW as an attachment to these minutes to Ross, Matt, Ben and Arnab.)</p> <p>Encourage transport working groups to review state agency and local member involvement.</p>
12:10	<p>Inspirations and learning from the day and any other general Q. & A.</p>	<p>Great coordination of TWGs groups</p> <p>Referral pathways and useful networking from the gathering</p> <p>Acknowledgement of transport disadvantage and that it's a determinant of health. Information. People don't know buses are there.</p> <p>Awareness</p>

		<p>Communication between providers. Collaboration at every level, communications and information, culture change. Push effective local communications through transport working groups and explore opportunities for council to promote services Ross: consider reconvening in six months and include TfNSW Communications and Active Transport representatives. Knowing there are people we can connect and work with. Fabulous to speak in a regional space. Consider a regional communications strategy on transport for Northern Rivers. People experiencing disability moving between modes (eg in Tweed) may be a problem. Accessible services and information including timetables, etc. Promoting services and connecting with active transport infrastructure.</p>
12:30	Evaluations, networking and further discussion over a catered light lunch before completing at 1pm	All