

Transport Connections

Project Two Rivers Transport Annual Report 04/05 Executive Summary

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Commencement date	1/07/2003
Local Government Areas Covered	This project covers the town of Casterton in Glenelg Shire and Port Fairy in Moyne Shire.
Objectives	<p>The goal of the project is to increase transport options in the nominated towns of Casterton and Port Fairy and to integrate them into the broader community transport network of South West Victoria.</p> <p>The Two Rivers Transport project aims to address each community's transport problems in a number of ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment of local part-time coordinators to provide information to local residents• Use of brokerage funds to support the introduction of new services using existing transport resources• Using a community development framework to involve the community to devise long-term, sustainable solutions to identified transport needs.

Overview

South west Victoria has a high proportion of people over 60 and the dispersed nature of major towns and services makes access difficult. People with disabilities living outside the major service centres are extremely disadvantaged if they do not have access to private transport. Public transport options are limited and some taxi services do not have wheelchair accessible vehicles. The Two Rivers Transport project seeks to address the transport disadvantage in the two quite different communities of Casterton and Port Fairy.

Casterton, in Glenelg Shire, is approximately mid way between Hamilton and Mt Gambier, the town has a population of around 2,000 with a further 1,300 in the surrounding areas. It is situated on the banks of the Glenelg River, the town centre is on the river flats but the hospital and medical services are located some distance away at the top of a hill making access by foot difficult for people who do not have a car.

One taxi operates in Casterton, it has a number of regular out of town bookings, which at times leaves residents without access to transport, it is not wheelchair accessible. Casterton is served by V Line but service times are not convenient for education and employment purposes and an overnight stay is required if residents wish to access Mt Gambier. A fixed route service runs to Hamilton on school days but is currently at full capacity.

Port Fairy is similar in size to Casterton but is better off in transport terms, however, residents still identify transport as a problem in accessing services. Timing of bus services mean that several hours must be spent in Warrnambool to access services there. Satellite communities of Port Fairy such as Yambuk, Bessiebelle and Koroit have almost no access to transport. Port Fairy has an excellent taxi service, however, a return trip to Warrnambool costs around \$90.

Key Achievements in 04/05

Having established local transport workers and recognised information points in each community in the first year of the project the past year has seen the development of some new services.

Casterton has used some brokerage funding to introduce a subsidised taxi fare allowing travel on the local taxi for \$2 per journey on Fridays for residents who can demonstrate transport disadvantage. There are currently 12 cardholders and a targeted promotion of the service is planned for the coming year. The taxi has reported that there has been an increase in business with some cardholders using his service at other times.

Casterton and the SWCTP along with the Glenelg Southern Grampians LLEN and Hamilton campus of South West TAFE have supported the proprietor of the Casterton Hamilton intertown service in his endeavours to expand his fixed route service. The operator has recently been granted an extension of his contract that will enable a second bus to run on the route commencing in 2006. The extra capacity will enable residents of Casterton to access education and employment opportunities in Hamilton, Coleraine will also benefit from this service expansion. School bus times are usually not suitable for TAFE and employment shifts but passengers may travel on the intertown service in the morning and return to Casterton on the V Line service that departs Hamilton at 5.40pm.

There have been significant community strengthening benefits to Casterton as a result of the formation of new relationships between organisations. As the project has progressed communication and linkages with organisations within the community have increased leading to many opportunities for information exchange, networking and service planning.

Links have been established with St Vincent de Paul; who provide emergency transport support, Casterton Memorial Hospital, Salvation Army Social Housing Service and other volunteer organisations.

This year Port Fairy placed a strong emphasis on improving the sustainability of their existing community transport service. Ten new volunteers were recruited to the Moyne Health Service and two training sessions, based on the Transporting Older People program, were provided. These volunteers are now employed as drivers for the community bus or other community transport and to assist passengers on the bus. An ongoing recruitment and induction process for volunteers is now in place. Review of the use of the community bus has allowed the addition of a new day program; the Fri Boys for older men, and promotion of its availability has increased usage by the community on evenings and weekends.

Improving Public Transport in Warrnambool: a case study was released in December 2004. One of the recommendations was to set up a steering group, this was convened in March 2005 and Coordinator of the South West Community Transport Program is a member of the group and convenor of two working groups; Services to smaller towns and Services to fringe areas. Services being considered that will affect the Port Fairy component of Two Rivers Transport are a town service and extension of an afternoon V Line service to Portland that will improve transport to some smaller communities.

Through inclusion in the south west community transport coordinators network workers from Casterton and Port Fairy have an opportunity to meet other transport workers in the region. This is an excellent forum for exchange of ideas and information about how other community transport services operate and cooperate with commercial providers.

Critical mass has been vital to the success of Transport Connections, as individual projects we may have got some support from regional DHS or DOI office but would have had to try very hard to get access to people with responsibilities school bus and taxi regulation and coordination of regional services. With nine projects all encountering similar barriers we have been able to use our regular meetings with Government stakeholders to discuss possible changes and bring our ideas to the attention of relevant officers.

Year Ahead Overview

CASTERTON

- Work with Casterton Memorial Hospital to improve community access to bus in down time – initially working to introduce a regular run to Hamilton for Blood Bank. Blood bank in Casterton has closed but still some people who wish to continue to donate blood.
- Improve documentation and data collection processes
- Promote taxi card and evaluate benefits to users
- Seek support from Glenelg Shire for some of the programs
- Promote carpooling information and investigate a driver buddy system.
- Strengthen linkages with other services and investigate opportunities to work in partnership to improve access to services

PORT FAIRY

- Continued promotion of transport information and community transport
- Work with the Community Services Manger of Moyne Shire to develop transport for satellite communities
- Work with Improving Public Transport in Warrnambool steering group to examine possibility of new services to benefit Port Fairy and surrounds
- Review documentation and data collection