

SDF Community Inclusion Initiative - Community of Practice

Topic 5: Transport

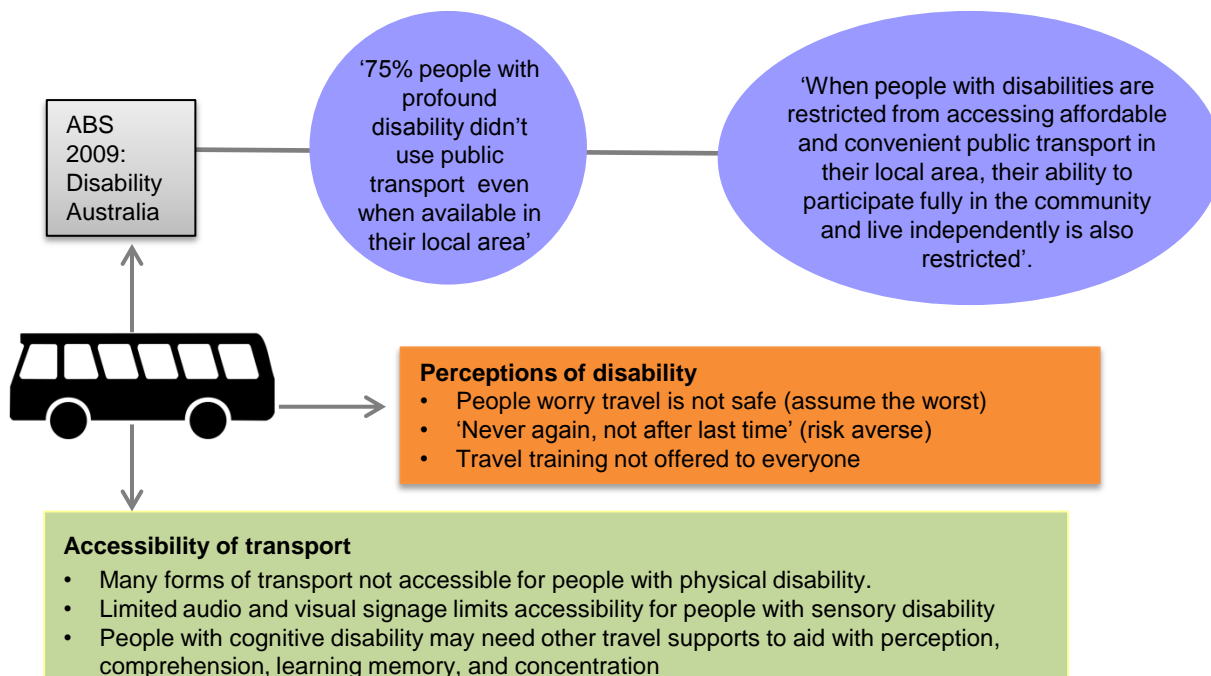
What is this?

This is the fifth in a series of resources to support providers of disability day services and community participation to increase community inclusion for people with disability. It is based on best practice and feedback from organisations participating in the Community Inclusion Initiative. It is intended as a conversation starter with frontline workers and team leaders, but can also be used with people with disability and their families.

1. Why are we talking about Transport?

Transport is a universal issue






- ✓ Australia is a big country! People often live some distance from where they spend their days.
- ✓ Most people use cars to travel, some use public transport and a few walk or cycle.
- ✓ Access to public transport is a right
 - ❑ UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons: '*obstacles and barriers to accessibility of roads and transportation should be eliminated*'
 - ❑ National Disability Strategy: '*A public, private and community transport system that is accessible for the whole community*'



Topic 5: Discussion questions

- Is your service located in an area accessible by multiple forms of transport?
- What are the most commonly used transport options for people you support?
- What are some common journeys, e.g. travel between activities, travel to centre, travel home?

2. Getting around

		Self-Powered	Car	Taxi	Provider Bus	Public transport
						
Service Users	Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're in charge - not reliant on others Cheap Come and go anytime Convenient Healthy Get to know locals en route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenient You/your family is in charge Come and go any time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence Get to know your driver(s) More flexible than public transport Taxi subsidies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prearranged Pick up and deliver door to door Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence Normal Develop skills Meet people Increases community options and interactions
	Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits access to local area and facilities Weather! Inaccessible footpaths Cycling on unsafe roads and hills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to purchase Cost of vehicle modifications Expensive to maintain Petrol costs Time commitment for families /carers City traffic Lack of convenient parking options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliability Cost, especially if limited transport funding Wait times can mean less service hours Some people need maxi taxis (no seat-to-seat transfers) Limited supply of maxi taxis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public perception of 'big white bus' and disability Segregation Long commute times on routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaccessibility (steps, limited lifts, platforms, poor shelter, communication) May need support to use Doesn't suit everyone Limited connections, routes and services (esp. in the country)
Service Providers	Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost Nothing to arrange – liaison with the person and family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost Nothing to arrange – liaison with person and family Car pooling increases options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fleet costs Bulk bookings gets priority status and requests Shared rides reduce costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoists, lifts and ease of accessibility Logistic control Start and finish times assured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal Good for travel training Improve 'reputation' for community norms Educate public
	Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Punctuality may impact on activity start time Limits choice of activities providers can suggest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays can impact on start and finish times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duplicate or different bookings for the same journeys made by families Staff coverage during waits Late starts to activities Safety concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to operate & maintain Logistics to organise Difficult to charge full cost recovery Bus size limits accessible parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timetables may not align with day service schedules Logistics of identifying shared routes and modes for people



Topic 5: Discussion questions

- Do you agree with the above?
- Are there other positives and negatives for people and providers?
- What initiatives has your organisation tried to address transport?

3. The logistics of transport

Provider transport – things to consider...

- Does your organisation own its own fleet?
- What proportion of the fleet are buses compared with cars and/or people movers?
- How much funding is tied up in purchasing and operating vehicles?
- How sustainable is a fleet of vehicles under individualised funding?
- Do you coordinate with vehicles owned by other services (including mainstream)?
- What message do buses with organisation logos give to the broader community?

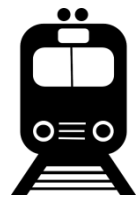


Taxis – things to think about ...

- Who takes lead responsibility for bookings - people, families or providers?
- Late taxis eat into activity time meaning users get less time engaged in activities – less value for funding
- Staff waiting time and costs if taxi is late. Who pays?
- What can we learn from Uber model about cost, choice and control?

Travel training...

- ✓ Individually designed programs – take your time to plan and introduce
- ✓ Get to know the person and their travel needs, wants and any concerns
- ✓ How can travel training help increase community encounters and participation?
- ✓ Supporting to identify best local transport options
- ✓ Recognising stops and routes
- ✓ Purchasing tickets and topping up travel cards
- ✓ Asking for assistance
- ✓ Back up plan when things don't go according to plan
- ✓ Safety training
- ✓ Using online maps and public transport apps prior to and during travel



Discussion questions

- What expectation is there in current funding agreements that organisations will arrange transport? Is this sustainable under the NDIS?
- What expectation do service users and their families have around transport?
- What other issues do services face?
- To what extent is your organisation prepared to collaborate with others or consider the use of alternative transport models?



4. Sharing ideas and practice



The following quotes were made by our Community of Practice reflecting on their current transport solutions and challenges

Successes

- “We have a long standing arrangement with a rental car company which gives us discounted rates. If we only need a car for a couple of hours they often only charge the insurance and not the hire fee. This arrangement has proved cheaper than paying staff to use their own cars to transport people. The hire company also extends their discounted rates to staff for private hire so they get a benefit as well.”
- “Because of our bulk bookings we were able to lobby the Victorian Taxi Directorate to prioritise short runs ahead of the queue, give specific driver instructions such as escorting the person, do not drop off on the opposite side of the road, where to sit in the car and augmented communication requirements.”
- “We encourage people to get their own license.”
- “A person has purchased and modified their own vehicle and the support staff drive it. He is responsible for all running costs but it means much greater independence.”
- “We find a buddy to ride the bus and help the person get on and off. It helps build their confidence.”
- “A support person travels to the person’s home and then rides public transport to and from various activities. This means parents can still get to work on time and the person gets travel training and experience.”
- “We work with other services and share transport wherever possible. In a small town, we know most people and staff will pick up and drop off others going to different services or locations, if it is on their usual route to work.”
- “We are working with Public Transport Victoria to run a ‘Try before you Ride Day’ to build people’s confidence to ride low floor buses and trams.”
- “Many people who do regular trips get the same taxi driver. The support staff have the taxi drivers’ numbers so they can book direct.”
- “Taxis have a PIN linked to the client and their trip which gives driver around communicating with the client, checking with the service before changing trip destinations.”
- “Some people travel to a central pick up point to reduce the cost of transport.”
- “Always get the taxi number as a safety precaution for clients. We had one driver who took a client on a long drive so when he was late the taxi company was able to find the driver on the GPS.”



Challenges

- “There are OHS issues where staff are transferring people in and out of private vehicles. This can come at considerable cost for an organisation.”
- “We currently subsidise travel for individuals as their travel contributions only cover a few kilometres each day. This can’t continue with individualised funding.”
- “We have buses donated by service clubs with signage on the side but they are not our preferred form of transport.”
- “Servicing remote communities can mean three or four hours of travel each way. If travel is not properly funded then people living in these communities will never receive a service.”
- “Community buses are not an option, they only take people to medical appointments.”
- “There are only two buses a day into and out of our town and they are not wheelchair accessible. There is only one accessible taxi and it has ongoing problems.”
- “It’s easy for travel training to become an activity rather than a skills development program.”

5. Presence, Encounter, Participation



Presence



Encounter



Participation



The 'norm'

Jai's mum drives him to his day service each morning. He is driven home on the centre bus each night because his Mum is still at work when the day service finishes.

Jai hates going home on the bus. It takes over an hour because he is one of the last dropped off on the route.

Stepping out

Jai's key worker Dave, notes that one of Jai's goals is to increase his independence.

Dave does some travel training with Jai and two other service users to help understand where and how to buy travel tickets and how to validate them on buses and trains.

Independent travel

Dave recognises that Jai needs more intensive travel training to help him get to and from home to the day service.

Dave and Jai work out the best route, which bus to catch from which stop, how to recognise the correct route and what to do if things go wrong.

Jai's confidence increases (as does his Mum's) and after 6 months he travels on his own to the day service. He is now working on travelling to the local shopping and recreation centres on the weekends.

*The journey of a
thousand miles
begins with a
single step.*
(Lao Tzu)



The house bus

Jessica, Rohan, Dale, Kate and Amber all live at the same shared accommodation house and travel together to and from the day service.

Dale and Amber are quite independent but if everyone travels to the centre together the house staff can finish their shift on time.

Individualised approach

The day and accommodation services work together to walk with Dale and Amber to and from the day service - one kilometre each way. The staff help Dale and Amber recognise the route, identify 'safe' spots if they feel threatened or lost and provide back up phone numbers on speed dial for emergencies.

Meeting more people

Dale and Amber regularly chat to local people they meet on their way to the day service.

Amber wants to spend more time walking to local activities on the weekend and evenings but doesn't always feel safe. She has enrolled in a self defence class to improve her confidence.

Dale now attends his local small pool instead of the large complex that everyone from the day service travels to by bus. This saves him money.

6. Thinking About the Future

Being able to get around conveniently, cost effectively and safely is critical for people with disability trying to increase their participation in the community. For the NDIS to work properly, people with disability, families and carers, service providers, community transport providers and mainstream services must work collaboratively to explore, design and promote new ideas and options.

How will transport issues affect time spent in activities?

Can you support participants to get their drivers' licence?



Are there transport options which increase encounters with others? (car pooling, connecting with walking groups, local residents and business)?

How can people use their funding to increase transport flexibility?

Could cycling increase community participation?

What other transport options are available, e.g. community transport, aged care, education?

Does your community have power points for recharging chairs?

Are transport issues different in rural and remote areas?

How accessible is your public transport network? What is your government doing to increase accessibility?

Find Out More...

- *Australian Bureau of Statistics: Disability, Australia, 2009 No. 4446.0* [Link](#)
- *Australian Government: Disability standards for accessible public transport 2002* [Link](#)
- *Cycling Australia: Inclusive Cycling* [Link](#)
- *No Way To Go: Transport and Social Disadvantage in Australian Communities* [Link](#)
- *National Disability Services, Participant transport and worker travel in the NDIS* [not yet released]
- *Peninsula Transport Inc . Volunteer transport service in outer Melbourne* [Link](#)
- *Public Transport Victoria. Travel Trainer Pass* [Link](#) and "Try Before You Ride Day" [Link](#)
- *Ridewise: A Guide to Travel Training (Portland, Oregon):* [Link](#)
- *Queensland Government Translink Travel Trainer Pass* [Link](#)
- *Travel Training: Good Practice Guidance UK Department of Transport:* [Link](#)
- *Transport Accessibility Standards: Attorney-General* ([Link](#)) *Human Rights Commission:* [Link](#)
- *Victorian Department of Human Services, TravelSmart Getting Started, 2011* [Link](#)

Contact Us!

We are interested to hear from people about community inclusion. Write and tell us what you think about these resources or any of the issues raised. What do you agree with? What have we missed?

Get in touch with James Bannister on james.bannister@NDS.org.au