COMMUNITY TRANSPORT POLICY

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Directorate: Corporate and Community Services
Department: Aged & Disability Services
Primary Author: Community Programs Team Leader
Coordinator: Aged & Disability Services
Secondary Author: Coordinator Aged & Disability Services

POLICY OBJECTIVE

Aim to provide:

1. Fair, accessible and equitable access to community transport, for residents of the Shire who are transport disadvantaged. Local people who are frail aged can find it difficult to access public or private transport services. This maybe because of a disability that impacts on their mobility, they live in a geographically isolated place or they cannot afford the cost of transport.

2. Positive partnerships are developed with stakeholders, both private and community based, to develop improved transport systems across the Shire. Promote existing services and programs available such as Travellers Aid and the Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS).

3. Clear policy and guidelines for Council staff and the community.

LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

- Local Government Act 1989
- Bus Safety Act 2009
- Aged Care Act 2016
- Home and Community Care Act (Australian Government) 1985
- Carers Recognition Act (Victoria 2012)

Program Service Agreements

- Victorian Home and Community Care (HACC) Program Manual 2013
- Home Care standards (Commonwealth (CHSP) and State (HACC)
- Commonwealth Home Support Programme Guidelines (CHSP) 2015

DEFINITIONS

Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) - People aged 65 years or over (and 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) will be funded and managed by the Australian Government under the new aged care model.

And

Home and Community Care (HACC) - Victorians aged under 65 years, or under 50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are funded by the Department of Health and Human Services State department.
Both programs aim to:

- Provide a coordinated and integrated range of basic support services for frail older people, younger people with disabilities, and their carers.
- Support these people to be more active and independent at home and in the community, thereby enhancing their quality of life and/or preventing inappropriate admission to hospital or long term residential care.
- Provide flexible, timely and responsive service.

Community Transport

Community transport (CT) provides services, either direct transport or support to access public transport, for people who are transport disadvantaged. Community transport is affordable, flexible, accessible and adaptable to individuals’ needs enabling them to participate in daily life. The Transport service is funded via Volunteer Coordination under both the HACC (State) and CHSP (Commonwealth) program, with Council and user fees making up the difference.

Community Transport Volunteers

Volunteers who drive clients to their destinations using the community transport resources. They have had a police check, reference checks and are provided with orientation as well as ongoing support from the Community Transport Team Leaders. It is not their role to provide personal assistance to eligible clients. Community Transport Volunteers are to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses when driving long distances.

Community Car

Any designated Council vehicle engaged to provide transport for eligible residents for the purpose of attending medical appointments and/or accessing other HACC services.

Community Bus

A Council vehicle purchased for the purpose of conveying eligible residents to appointments, community activities and facilities on a regular scheduled basis.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to supporting residents to remain independent, safe and secure in their community through the provision of transport opportunities for the frail aged and younger people with disabilities, including but not limited to HACC and CHSP clients, and their carers. It also aims to reduce isolation to residents who have no other means or access to transport.

Council provides transport assistance to a range of medical, social and community appointments and/or activities. It aims to supplement and not replace existing public or commercial services.

GUIDELINES

This policy will be implemented by Aged and Disability Services staff using the following guidelines.
1. All potential clients are required to be assessed.

2. All assessments are undertaken by Council assessment staff in accordance with HACC or CHSP Program criteria. Clients who are assessed as eligible for HACC & CHSP services will have priority for the Community Transport program.

3. Residents, assessed as low-level need, in Commonwealth and State funded residential care facilities are eligible to use the community cars. The nursing supervisor, not the resident, must make all requests for service. The nursing supervisor will determine the suitability of their resident to use the community transport service as all passengers must be independent.

4. Residents who do not have a car or cannot drive either temporarily or permanently and are isolated, can access a community bus in their area where there are seats available. These residents will be charged at a non-subsidised rate.

5. In accordance with the Victorian HACC Program Manual and National CHSP Guidelines, residential care residents will not take precedence over HACC clients and will be charged as per the South Gippsland Shire Council fees and charges schedule.

Note: The Commonwealth and State governments fund residential care facilities. As part of these funding arrangements residential care providers are expected to facilitate access to transport for their residents.

6. When not being used by Council’s Community Transport Program, the community buses may be hired by not-for-profit community groups. Such groups will not take precedence over HACC eligible target groups and must adhere to Council’s “Conditions of Hire & Use”. Hirers will be charged the adopted South Gippsland Shire Council fees and charges schedule. Hirers must be a registered bus operator as per the Bus Safety Act 2009 and support can be provided to groups if required.

7. At least one vehicle will be fitted out with the appropriate access and mobility equipment, compliant with the relevant Australian Standards.

8. When Council’s community transport is not available, clients will be referred to alternative service providers such as South Gippsland Health Service and the Red Cross Community Transport Service (Inverloch and Yarram).

9. Council financial contribution capped at 50 per cent.

RISK ASSESSMENT

This policy provides a framework for Council to deliver a high quality, person-centred service that is financially sustainable.

The Community Transport service is to be reviewed before the cessation of the 3 year service agreement of guaranteed funding ending 30 June 2019.

IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

Council’s Corporate and Community Services Directorate, in particular the Aged & Disability Services, has responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.