



Rural and Regional Young People and Transport



Improving Access to Transport
for Young People in
Rural and Regional Australia

NATIONAL
YOUTH
AFFAIRS
RESEARCH
SCHEME

RURAL AND REGIONAL YOUNG PEOPLE AND TRANSPORT

IMPROVING ACCESS TO TRANSPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

A report to the

National Youth Affairs Research Scheme

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THE NATIONAL YOUTH AFFAIRS RESEARCH SCHEME (NYARS) was established in 1985 as a cooperative funding arrangement between the Australian Government and the State and Territory Governments to facilitate nationally-based research into current social, political and economic factors affecting young people. The Scheme operates under the auspices of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

Reports from NYARS studies released since the early 1990s are available free-of-charge on the web site of the Australian Government Department responsible for youth affairs. At the time this report was published, the web site address was: <http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-nyars.htm>

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Abbreviations

AAA	Australian Automobile Association	SA	South Australia
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	SWDC	South West Development Commission (West Australia)
AAS	Area Assistance Scheme (NSW)	TAS	Tasmania
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	TYCC	Tasmanian Youth Consultative Committee
AUST	Australia	UK	United Kingdom
BAH	Booz Allen Hamilton	VET	Vocational and Educational Training Program
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service	VIC	Victoria
CTA	Community Transport Association (UK)	WA	West Australia
DOT	Department of Transport	WITS	Welland Internet Transport Service (UK)
HACC	Home and Community Care Program	WP	Working Paper
LGA	Local Government Area	W2W	Wheels to Work
NSW	New South Wales	YAXI	Youth Taxi
NT	Northern Territory	YNOT	Youth Network of Tasmania
NYARS	National Youth Affairs Research Scheme	YOWI	Youth on Wheels Inc (NSW)
QLD	Queensland		
ROMP	Rural Online Mobile Project (UK)		

Definitions

The focus of this report is young people in rural and regional Australia. The terms rural and regional refer to all areas of Australia outside the capital cities of each State and Territory. The terms regional centre, regional urban centres, regional towns and regional and/or rural villages refer to population centres of varying sizes outside capital cities. The term rural hinterland is used to define areas not located in rural population centres but which are not isolated from them by very long-distances. Rather, these are typical of agricultural areas with people living on individual farms. Locations termed remote or isolated are situated a long-distance (many hundreds of kilometres) from major population centres. The analysis in section 2.3.1 of this report presents an analysis of data using the Australian Bureau of Statistics definitions of “remoteness regions”. A full definition of the ABS regions is presented in their publication Cat 1244.0 “Information Paper: ABS Views on Remoteness” 2001.



Introduction

Transport is an essential part of life in rural and regional Australia. It enables access to necessary goods and services and is an important part of participating in educational, social and recreational activities. Due to the dispersed nature of rural and regional communities, there are only limited public transport services available. Yet the dispersed nature of these communities also means that important activities and major goods and services often require a significant transport task.

Lack of access to transport can be a major problem for young people in rural and regional areas. Inaccessibility to public transport means greater reliance on private vehicles and for young people continued dependence on the family and friends for access to education, employment, training, recreation and social activities. Without transport, access to activities is limited and economic and social opportunities can be restricted.

There are significant challenges in meeting the transport needs of rural and regional young people. Governments at all levels play different and sometimes overlapping roles in separate segments of the passenger transport industry in rural and regional areas. Policy and institutional approaches vary between Australian States and Territories. Different parts of Australia have rather different transport issues and the nature, distribution and availability of transport services varies considerably.

1.1 Purpose of this report

In recognising the need to investigate the transport needs of young people living in rural and regional Australia, and to seek integrated solutions to meet these needs, this project was commissioned as part of the program of the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS).

The aim of the project is to:

... investigate transport and travel for rural and regional young people, to examine successes and challenges in improving the provision of transport services to young people, and to focus on viable solutions to their transport needs.

This research is to:

- provide insight into a range of models employed by State and Territory Governments and local government in service delivery. Identify cross jurisdictional/cross-regional models;
 - draw on experiences across different States/Territories;
 - examine the extent of privatisation of transport systems and extent of impacts on youth;
 - explore case studies of international experience;
 - investigate the role of community organisations and volunteers; and
 - provide government, service providers and the community with tools to assist in improving services.
-

Key project objectives are to:

- identify why rural young people need transport;
- identify when the need for transport is most evident during the day;
- provide an overview of transport options, including community transport, private transport etc.;
- identify opportunities and advantages of transport options for youth;
- identify challenges governments confront that hinder the expansion of transport for rural youth;
- use case studies to examine innovative attempts to add value to existing transport systems and coordinate community transport for young people, providing advice and recommendations on the methods for quality improvement;
- consider options for existing government bodies or departments to collaborate in developing a fully integrated rural transport system including community transport; and
- identify with whom the responsibility for advocacy, coordination and overseeing of such an integrated transport system should rest and whether specific powers are necessary.

1.2 Project methodology

Figure 1.1 (page 3) illustrates the methodology applied in this project.

Major research requirements were:

- a travel needs review, compiling available research evidence on transport issues associated with young people in rural and regional areas;
- a transport operations experience review with particular reference to transport for young people;
- consultations with young people. For this reason a consultation program was developed incorporating views on existing needs and issues (Task A4) and also market testing of ideas for transport improvement (Task B2);
- case studies of good practice transport projects (Task B1);
- reviews of international experience and practice (Task A1); and

- an assessment of existing government institutional frameworks (Task C2) including specific consideration of the Australian community transport sector (Task A2).

This project was undertaken in three phases with working papers produced at each step to ensure feedback from the wider research team and project stakeholders.

1.3 Report structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 – Transport needs

Describes the transport issues faced by young people in rural and regional Australia. This is sourced from a literature review, an analysis of available transport statistics and from the findings of the consultation program undertaken as part of the project.

Chapter 3 – Transport services in rural and regional Australia

Describes the services currently available in rural and regional areas and presents available national information on usage of transport services. This includes a summary of the review of the Australian community transport sector undertaken as part of the project.

Chapter 4 – Best practice case studies

Describes five best practice Australian transport projects targeting the needs of young people in rural and regional areas. This includes an assessment of key success factors in transport project development.

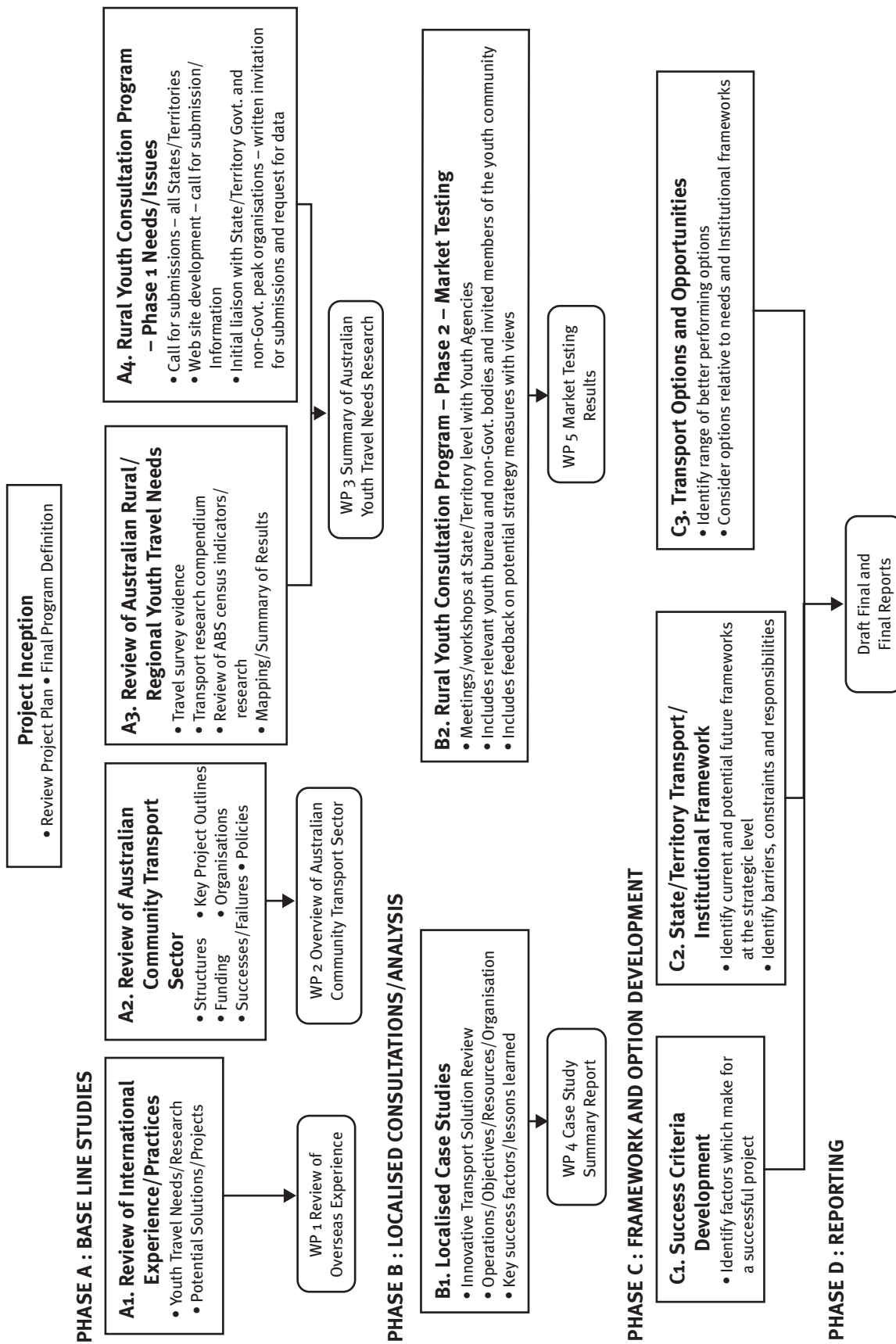
Chapter 5 – Transport options and opportunities

Identifies better performing transport options which target young people. This includes the views and feedback from young people on ideas for improvements in transport.

Chapter 6 – The way forward

Identifies ways to address transport issues based on the findings of this project.

Figure 1.1: Project methodology





Transport needs

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter describes the transport issues faced by young people in rural and regional Australia. This is sourced from a literature review (covering both Australian and international sources), an analysis of available transport statistics and from the findings of the consultation program undertaken as part of the project. Much of the international literature is sourced from the UK. Whilst rural and regional conditions in the UK contrast strongly with the Australian environment much of this research is still relevant to this study.

2.2 Previous research

Previous research is best examined from three perspectives:

- transport and travel needs of rural and regional young people;
- transport issues that arise from living in rural and regional areas; and
- the impacts that lack of transport can have on young people.

2.2.1 Transport and travel needs

There is poor coverage of research literature related to the travel needs of young people in Australia and even less concerning those living in rural and regional areas. Transport research

in rural and regional Australia tends to focus on freight and long-distance travel (Nutley 2003). For example national transport conferences on rural and remote Australia have tended to equate transport with freight and export industries (Byrnes 1987 and Australian Government Departments of Transport and Communications and Primary Industries and Energy 1991).

A specific national forum was held on “transport and young people in rural and regional Australia” at Terrigal (NSW), by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, in February 2003. The forum was primarily focused on identifying transport solutions although it included a report on local transport needs research (Khong 2003). This research identified the following travel access needs as those most frequently mentioned by Year 10 students:

- part-time employment;
- sports or competitions;
- apprenticeships/traineeships;
- TAFE study;
- employment-related activities such as work placement and employment training; and
- social activities including movies and visiting friends.

This research supports the findings of a review of transport needs for young Tasmanians (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). This review demonstrated that the

transport needs of young people vary with age and therefore the type of activities undertaken (see Table 2.1). As young people grow they seek a greater level of personal participation in the activities of life. As

young people get older their needs become more wide ranging and the activities they take part in become more diverse and cover a wider geographic area.

Table 2.1: Typical activities undertaken by young people

Age group	Typical activities
Pre-school years	Play-school, informal play with other children, birthday parties.
Early primary years	School, play with other children outside school, visits to places of interest, parties.
Upper primary	School, informal play, more formalised sporting activities, uniformed organisations, visits of a more educational nature, hobbies and interests, first sleepover, parties.
Lower secondary (pre-teens)	School, after-school activities, sports (school teams or local teams), outdoor recreational activities other than team games, uniformed organisations, youth clubs, visiting friends made at school (new friends made at comprehensive school may well be in another village many miles on the other side of town), first paid employment (legally from age 12), longer residential activities with peer group, disco, youth club.
Upper secondary (mid-teens)	School, after-school activities, more serious sport, following own interests in outdoor activities, some general youth organisations or clubs still retaining appeal, more specialised organisations in line with their own interests, staying over with friends, a greater range of part-time employment, more serious partying.
16 plus	Further education in a less formal institution than school, apprenticeship, some in first full-time employment, able to ride a moped or drive a tractor on the road, serious partying, clubbing, dating, holidays without parents, full membership of sports/activity clubs/groups.
18 plus	Higher education/university, part-time and holiday employment to support this, more in full-time employment, pubbing, clubbing, more dating and marriage, whole range of activities/interests/entertainments.

Source: Booz Allen Hamilton (2003) adapted from CTA (2002).

Whether these needs can be satisfied depends on:

- the extent to which the activity is available locally;
- whether the activity can be brought to the user; or
- whether transport is available to take them to these activities.

There is a lack of comprehensive information on the travel habits of young people in Australia. Witherby (1993) summarises the overall rural Australian transport situation as “overwhelmingly car-dependent” with public transport virtually non-existent except for buses in medium-sized towns, taxis and school buses. Only a small proportion of young people can drive or have access to a car.

Khong (2003) demonstrated the mode share of travel of Year 10 students on the Central Coast of NSW for various trip types (Figure 2.1 on page 7). This illustrated:

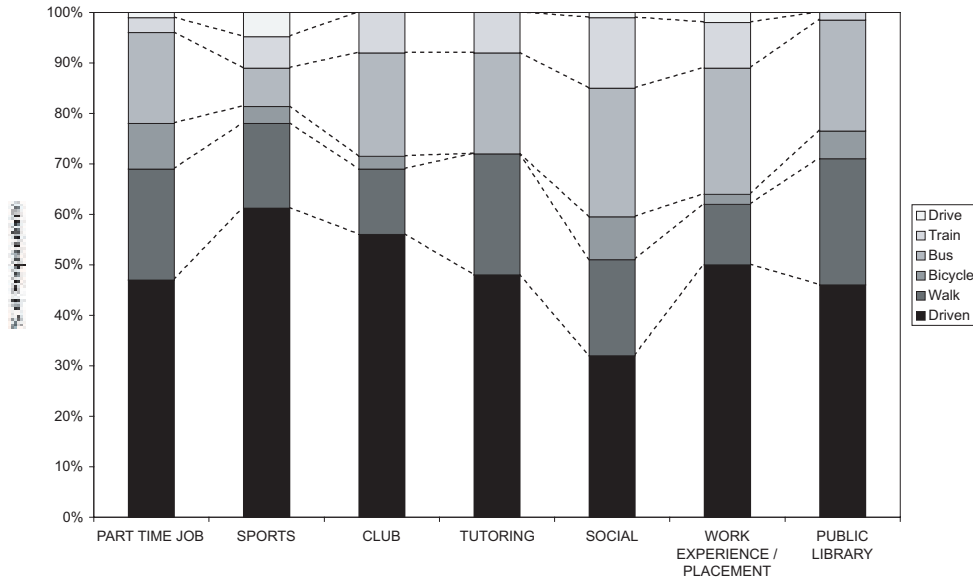
- the dominance of getting a lift for most travel options. Over half of all travel to work experience placements, sports events, clubs and tutoring activities were by getting a lift; and
- walk and bus were the next most significant modes.

The reliance on getting lifts as a primary travel mode for young people was also highlighted in a study of travel options for young people in Tasmania (Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) 2003). This study established that getting lifts from parents and getting lifts via friends were the most commonly mentioned travel modes for young people. Getting

lifts for travel was significantly higher in young people aged below 17 than those aged 17 years and above. Private modes of transport (car, and getting a

lift) were reported three times more frequently than public transport in a study in Ballarat, Victoria (Green and McDonald 1996).

Figure 2.1: Year 10 student mode of transport by activity



Source: Khong (2003).

A major thrust of social needs research in the UK is the concept of transport and social exclusion. The term “social exclusion” refers to more than just poverty or low income, but it is closely related to them. Social exclusion is defined as a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health, family breakdown, and lack of adequate transport. These problems tend to have a cumulative and reinforcing effect on each other, preventing people from fully participating in society (Social Exclusion Unit 2003).

A study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Cartmel and Furlong 2000) found that young adults in rural areas are far more likely than their urban peers to experience social exclusion. One of the leading reasons for this is the lack of adequate transport available to rural young people.

Inadequate transport is said to contribute to social exclusion in two ways:

- first, it can stop people from participating in work, learning, health care, food shopping and other activities, such as volunteering and community participation; and

- second, people in socially excluded communities also suffer the worst effects of road traffic through pollution and pedestrian accidents. Poor transport has costs for individuals, businesses, communities and the State.

Figure 2.2: Relationship between transport, rural characteristics and social exclusion

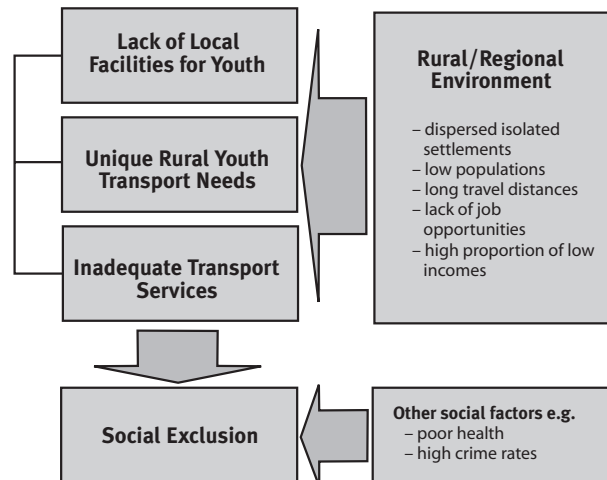


Figure 2.2 (page 7) shows how the rural environment, young people's specific needs, inadequate transport services and the potential influence of other social factors interact and can lead to social exclusion.

The impacts of inadequate transport have been shown to limit access to basic activities for young people in rural parts of the UK (Cartmel and Furlong 2000):

- two out of five jobseekers say lack of transport is a barrier to getting a job. One in four say that the cost of transport is a problem getting to interviews. More than one in six people in low-income areas have not applied for a particular job in the last 12 months because of transport problems, while for 16-to-25-year-olds this figure is one in four. One in 10 people in low-income areas have turned down a job in the last 12 months because of transport problems. People with driving licences are twice as likely to get jobs than those without;
- transport is potentially a key cause of young people dropping out of school or college. Sixteen-to-18-year-olds spend on average £370 a year on transport and 47 per cent of this age range experience difficulty with this cost (compared to 19 per cent of older students). Six per cent of 16-to-24-year-olds turn down training or further education opportunities because of problems with transport; and
- thirty-one per cent of people without a car have difficulties travelling to their local hospital, compared to 17 per cent of people with a car. Seven per cent of people without cars say they have missed, turned down, or chosen not to seek

medical help over the last 12 months because of transport problems. Over a 12-month period, three per cent of people or 1.4 million miss, turn down or choose not to seek medical help because of transport problems. Children from the lowest social class are five times more likely to die in road accidents than those from the highest social class.

2.2.2 Transport issues – rural and regional young people

There are two main issues that rural young people face, the rural and regional environment they live in and the lack of viable transport options available to them (which to a certain extent is a product of the rural environment).

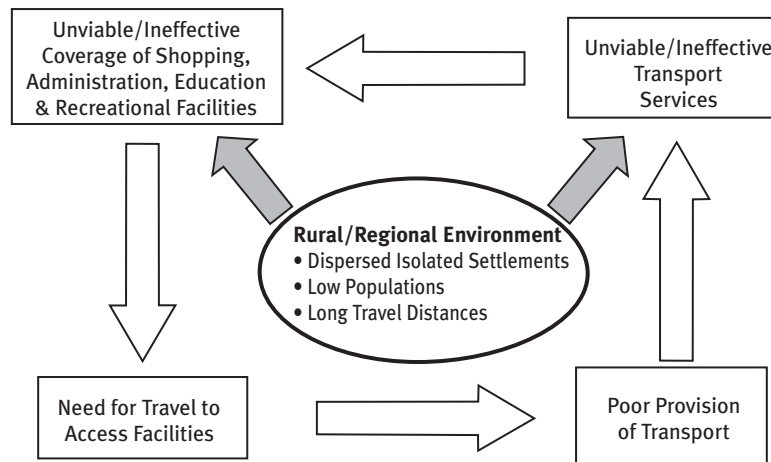
The rural/regional environment and transport

Rural areas are characterised by:

- low population density;
- small total population;
- predominantly agricultural or primary industry functions;
- areas in which non-built-up areas are predominant compared to built-up areas; and
- areas which are geographically isolated and remote.

Older and younger people alike face a series of issues due to poor access to transport, amenities and activities. Dependence on the car is one of these issues. Figure 2.3 shows what has been termed as the “vicious cycle of rural car dependence” (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003).

Figure 2.3: The vicious cycle of rural car dependence



Source: *Tasmanian Youth Transport Strategy (2003)*.

Two major issues contribute to car dependence:

- non-viable public transport – due to highly dispersed nature of rural areas. A survey of Australian rural dwellers (Finlay and Kelso 1995) found that 29 per cent had to travel more than 20 km to get to public transport; and
- non-viable provision of services, shopping and recreation facilities – the small catchment of people makes it difficult to make facilities viable.

Most families have a motor vehicle, but the likelihood of a rural family not having a motor vehicle (two per cent) is less than in towns or cities (six per cent for both) (ABS 2003). The greater dependence on cars is further indicated by the fact that just over two thirds of rural families (69 per cent) had two or more motor vehicles compared with just over half of families in towns (52 per cent) or cities (54 per cent) (ABS 2003).

As well as the need to travel further (and use more fuel), the cost of petrol is usually higher in most rural areas (Australian Automobile Association 2003). Excluding fuels used for business purposes (for example, running the farm), families in rural areas spent on average \$32.43 per week on motor vehicle fuel and lubricants in 1993–94, whereas families in capital cities spent \$25.54 (ABS 2003).

Young people can be particularly affected by the lack of public transport options and local services and amenities because of the prohibitive cost of owning a car including petrol and higher insurance premiums (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). In addition, often their age prevents them from driving even if they have access to a car.

Poor information about facilities and services available is a long-standing issue that has been raised

in a number of forums regarding young people and transport:

Transport barriers also limit the flow of information about resources and activities to country young people. Many have no public transport access to Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) offices or Youth Access Centres. As a result, they are unable to obtain information about employment and training programs and services. Ironically, the inability to access such information means that some young people are unaware they can receive assistance with transport and accommodation costs related to education or training outside their community (Quixley 1992:97). (Croce 1993).

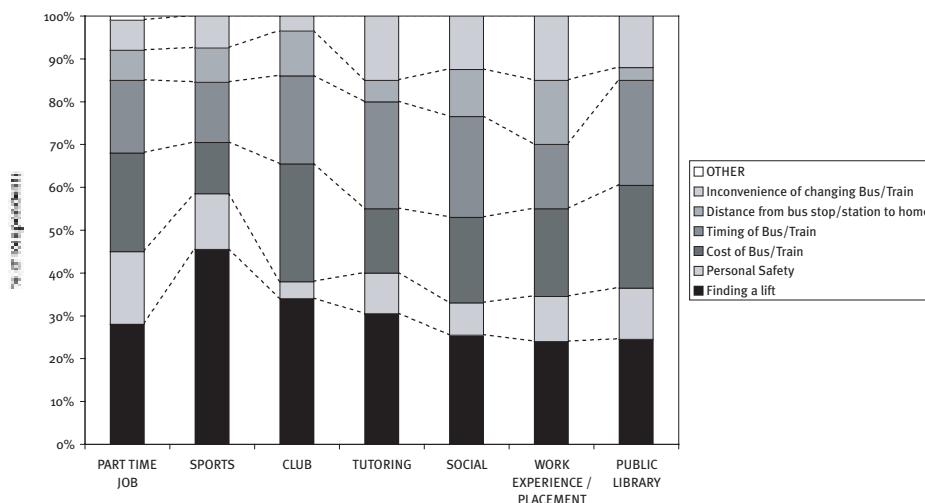
In addition there has been a trend towards reducing and centralising the provision of services and facilities in rural and regional areas. This has increased the requirement for travel as well as the burden on existing transport resources. Bragg and Reedy (2001) have noted that the number, length and complexity of travel to health facilities have increased as a result of centralisation and rationalisation of medical clinics:

The centralisation of medical services is the greatest problem for our service. Existing local services are being abolished and visiting specialists are now non-existent in our area. Everybody who lives in the area we service who is referred to a medical specialist now has to travel to another town for that service.

Issues related to specific transport modes

Khong (2003), found that young people often relate transport issues with specific transport modes (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Transport issues modes and trip purposes



Source: Khong (2003).

These issues were raised in the YNOT (2003) youth transport research and are summarised by mode in Table 2.2 and discussed by mode below.

Table 2.2: Overview of transport issues related to specific transport modes

Mode	Issues
Private car/getting a lift	Most below driving age rely on lifts for most journeys. Most have no choice but to get own car. Cost can be prohibitive. Finding work is difficult without a car. Need to rely on others to get lifts. Lack of independence in getting lifts.
Public transport	Low frequency and sparse networks. High fares and unfriendly attitudes from drivers and other passengers.
Walking/cycling	Offer autonomy but long-distances make it prohibitive.
Other transport options	Taxis – very few based in rural areas, fares are high when available. Community transport services are not always available.

Source: Khong (2003), YNOT (2003).

Khong (2003) also identified the relative magnitude of specific transport issues affecting young people. High transport cost was identified as the main priority followed by concerns regarding lack of public transport.

A similar set of concerns were raised by Storey

and Brannen (2000) in a review of young peoples' experiences and perceptions of transport in rural locations in South West England. The main findings of the study are set out in Table 2.3 below. There are clear correlations between the findings in Australia and the international contexts.

Table 2.3: Young people's experience of transport in rural areas of the UK

Mode	Young people's experience
Public transport	Sparse networks means linking transport to get to pick-up points. Low frequency can also result in people being "stranded" at the end of the day.
	High fares from rural areas, youth sometimes have to pay adult fares.
	Poor publicity about services available.
	Unfriendly attitude of drivers and older passengers, expect young people to cause trouble.
Getting lifts	Rely on lifts for most journeys (2/3 of non-school journeys for those under 17).
	Many lifts are "special journeys", depend on parents availability.
	Young people in one-car or no-car households are disadvantaged.
Walking and cycling	While they offer greater autonomy, neither is popular because of volume of traffic on rural roads and distances involved.
	Because of these factors most cycle or walk for short journeys or for recreational purposes.
Preference for the car	Perceived as a key step to achieving personal freedom. Most consider that their rural situation gives no choice: either get their own transport or move away from town.
	Financial help is normally necessary for young people to get (and maintain) their own car. Those without the financial means can be excluded from opportunities and services, as are those who are precluded from driving through illness or disability.
	Having own transport is often necessary to get employment.

Table 2.3 continued

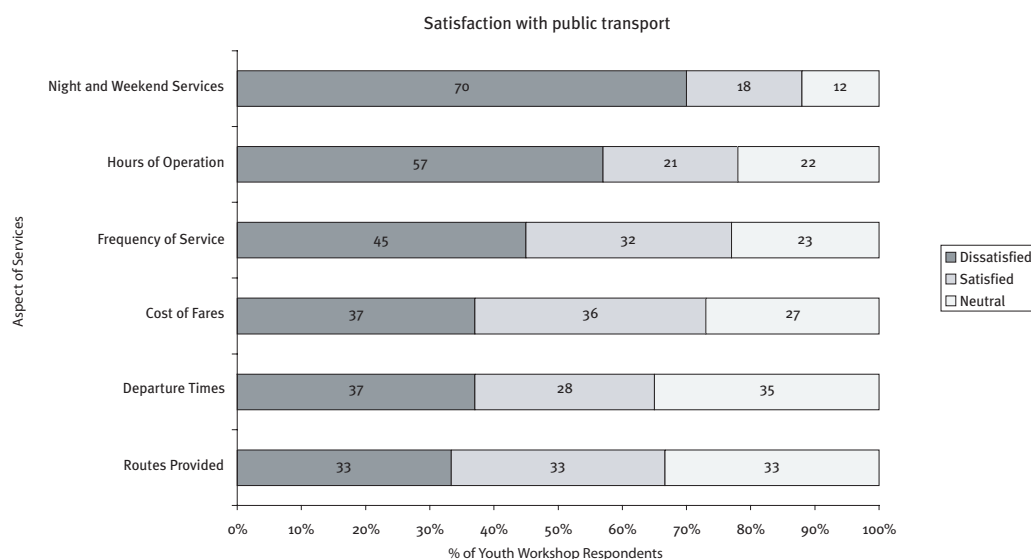
Other transport options	Very few taxis are based locally in rural areas. Where they are available, fares are generally high.
	Community transport schemes (where available) often do not meet the needs of young people, focusing instead on the elderly and disabled.

Source: Storey and Brannen (2000).

Public transport

YNOT (2003) undertook a structured consultation process to identify problems and issues young people had with public transport in Tasmania. Figure 2.5 shows some of the results from this analysis.

Figure 2.5: Young people views on public transport services



Source: Booz Allen Hamilton analysis of YNOT (2003) results.

Lack of evening and weekend services is a big transport issue because this is when young people are out of school or work and need to use the services for social/recreational activities. Similar concerns were voiced by young people in the Northern Territory (Booz Allen Hamilton 1998). A survey of rural young people near Ballarat, Victoria, found that public transport was not relied on to get people to activities due to low service levels and lack of evening and weekend services (Green and McDonald 1996).

The major problem with rural and regional public transport services is the low frequency of bus services. For example, in Tasmania there are 25 village-to-town services linking the smaller rural and regional settlements to the larger urban areas.

Typically there are only two return trips per weekday and one on weekends. Over 70 per cent of the rural routes available don't operate on the weekend (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). A survey of young people living in the remote communities of South West Western Australia (South West Development Commission (SWDC) 2000) also identified higher frequency services within and between towns as a major priority of young people for service improvement. The slightly different emphasis on improved service between towns reflects the need to link young people with activities available in other settlements. The same study emphasised the provision of inter-town links and also "runaway buses" as a means to relieve the boredom many young people faced being confined to small communities with few activities.

Other issues with public transport include long walks just to get to the bus stops. Often this walk has been identified as being impractical.

Fares tend to be high even if concessions are available; this is exacerbated by long travel distances. One study reported that for young unemployed people to visit a nearby centre by bus, the costs ranged from \$10 to \$45 for the return trip¹ (Quixley 1992).

Private car

Car ownership is an expensive option beyond the means of most unemployed young people. Even where bus services are relatively close, lack of a private vehicle coupled with high bus fares makes accessibility very difficult. Most young people in rural areas consider getting their own car is a key to freedom and their only viable transportation choice.

Many young people, especially those not old enough to drive, rely on lifts from parents for most journeys. In Tasmania 61 per cent of people who identified lifts from parents as their main form of transport were under 17 (Youth Network of Tasmania 2003). This finding was supported by Green and McDonald (1996), which identified getting a lift as the most common mode of transport for most activities.

“For those lucky enough to own their own [a car] it is their most treasured possession. If they don’t have a car, it is the most aspired to and coveted object. Some save meticulously from their own meagre earnings. Other, more fortunate, receive a car from their parents. A car represents freedom to be able to go where you want, when you want. A car means independence. The car has a very practical value in rural communities.”

– Glenda Jones (rural youth researcher)

Because many young people rely on parents for rides they are limited by parent’s availability and demands on their time. Those living in a household with one car or even no car are particularly disadvantaged.

Walking and cycling

Walking and cycling to destinations are practical options for young people generally only if they live in urban areas or large regional centres. There are also a number of safety issues that many young people may find prohibitive. The Green and McDonald (1996) study found that 61 per cent of young people surveyed owned a bike, but only approximately 10 per cent of journeys made were by bike.

Other options

Typically in rural and regional areas there are very few taxis based locally. Where taxis are available high fares, even with concessions, make them very expensive. In Tasmania taxi access is very limited. Some regions have one taxi per 8 000 people spread over a wide area (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). Typically in rural Tasmania there is one taxi per 2 100 people; this is more than twice the ratio for urban areas.

Community transport services are often provided in rural areas, but these are most often either provided specifically for medical purposes or for the elderly or are owned by specific community groups and for their use only.

Personal security and safety issues

Concerns regarding personal security on public transport were raised in studies in the Central Coast of NSW (Khong 2003), Ballarat, Victoria (Green and McDonald 1996) and also in Tasmania (YNOT 2003). This was clearly a barrier to usage at nights and weekends, the time when young people most need to travel.

A review of transport issues in the Northern Territory (Booz Allen Hamilton 1998) also identified concerns amongst rural and regional parents that young children were being left at bus stops awaiting school services without supervision.

The Tasmanian Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services (2001) noted the very high road accidents fatality rates of young people. Young people were reported to have comprised 40 per cent of the annual road death toll in Tasmania. The same study raised concerns regarding the car dependence of young people particularly in rural areas and the road safety concerns this raised for this group.

2.2.3 Impacts of lack of transport on young people

Lack of social and recreational activities

Getting to see friends or going out at night can be significant problems for rural young people who do not have their own transport (YNOT 2003). Often there are no other young people living locally, meaning that seeing friends is entirely dependent on the availability of transport. This usually requires a car as public transport typically does not run in the evenings and weekends, thereby increasing dependence on parents (Storey and Brannon 2000).

One study found that lack of transport access to leisure facilities resulted in an increased feeling of

¹ Assuming fares rise with the change in the Consumer Price Index (average of all capital cities) current values (2004) of these bus fares would be between around \$14 to \$60.

isolation from social and cultural facilities (Daniels and Cornwall 1993).

The highest single priority for improvements in lifestyle identified by young people living in rural South West Western Australia (SWDC 2000) was a need for greater opportunities to access recreational activities. Improved transport was identified as the central issue limiting access to these needs.

Similar issues were raised by rural young people in Victoria (Dept. of Education, Employment and Training 2001). Concerns regarding timing of late night return trips home after entertainment events were also noted:

Of particular concern was the lack of transport to and from entertainment venues when the event may finish after the last bus, and taxis and maxi-cab pooling was considered prohibitively expensive.

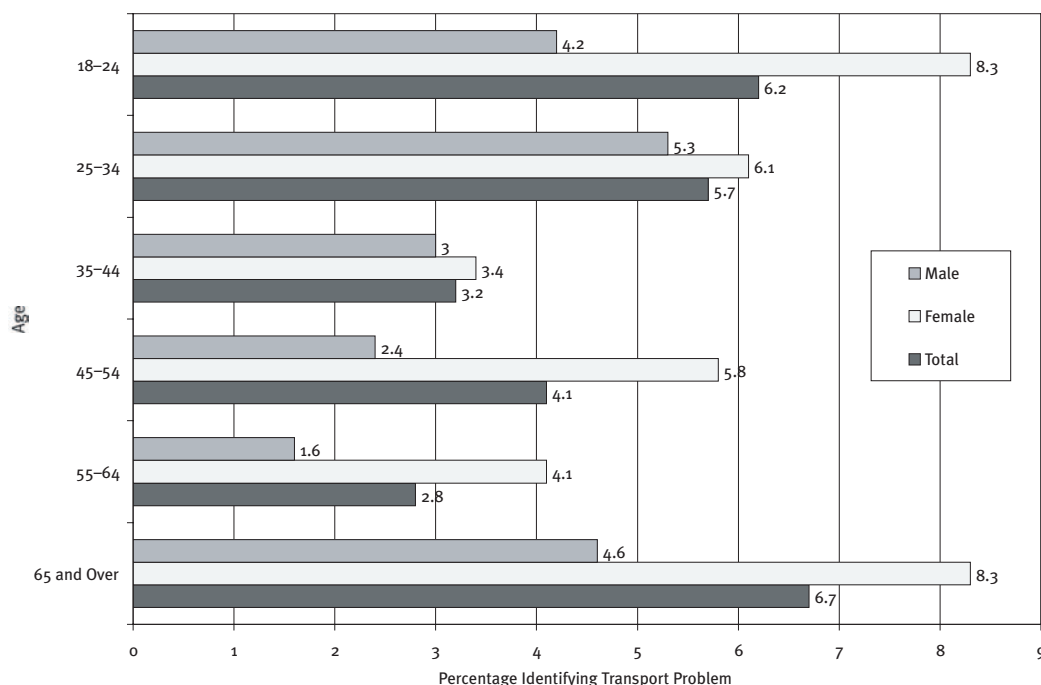
An ABS study of transport patterns in NSW (ABS 1996) identified people who could not attend recreational events due to transport problems. This was done by age group throughout the State (results for people from rural and regional areas was amalgamated into the State average). The results were available by age as well as sex and

provide some interesting insights into the impacts of transport problems in limiting access to recreational facilities (Figure 2.6).

This analysis suggests that young people and also those aged over 65 have more transport-related barriers to access to recreation than the rest of the population. What is also significant is that these barriers appear to be predominately faced by females. Almost twice as many young women aged between 18–24 noted being unable to attend events than males.

There are also the wider social and psychological concerns which can result from the limited opportunities available for rural young people. Without access to a wider group of people and social and recreational activities, a feeling of isolation and a lack of personal freedom can result (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). Dudley et al. (1998) found that the greatest increases in suicide rates for youth have occurred in the smaller rural towns with populations less than 4000 people. The study suggests that the general movement of young people from inland (typically rural) to coastal (typically more urbanised) areas may have resulted in greater social disadvantage for those who remain in rural areas.

Figure 2.6: Proportion of persons unable to attend recreational events due to transport problems – NSW



Source: ABS 9201.1 Transport Patterns and Preferences NSW October 1996.

Lack of education, training and work opportunities

Khong (2003) identified a number of respondents from the Central Coast of New South Wales who had missed out on work opportunities as a result of transport problems. These are detailed in Table 2.4. Similar concerns were voiced in rural Western Australia (SWDC 2000).

Table 2.4: Examples of missed employment opportunities – Central Coast young people 2003

Location	Missed activity	Transport difficulty
Buckets	Part-time job	“There’s not enough buses.”
Tascott	Work placement at Hoyt’s	“Too far for a lift and too expensive for buses.”
North Gosford	Part-time job	“If I had to work late, safety on buses was not good enough and I would have to walk a fair way in the dark so getting home was a problem.”
Kariong	Work	“There is no public transport and mum couldn’t take me both ways.”
Tascott	Part-time job	“Because it would be in the afternoon after school and it would be difficult to get home.”
Mangrove Mountain	Part-time job	“It was too far for Mum to drive everyday. There was no other transport.”
Kariong	Job interview	“Couldn’t get a bus. There wasn’t one from Kariong and no parents were home.”

Source: Khong (2003).

Lack of access to education and training was also identified in Tasmania (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). A study of barriers to access to higher education for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community found that the single biggest barrier to access was lack of transport (ABS 1994).

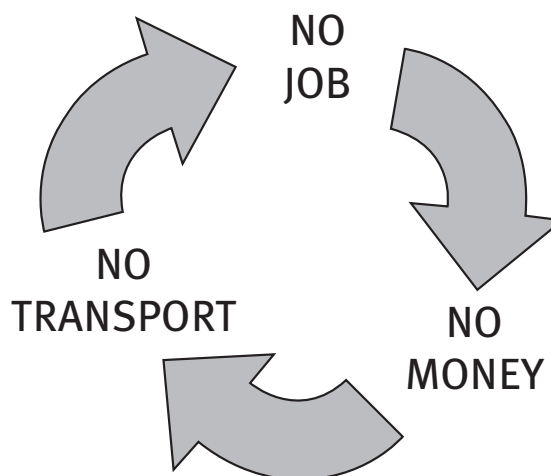
Lack of access to education means that some young people choose to stay in rural areas and work rather than attend further education and training. In Tasmania (where only 42 per cent of the State is urbanised), take up of education in rural areas is half the rate of those in urban areas (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). Across Australia the proportion of young people attending secondary school outside of major cities was lower than the national average and decreased with increasing remoteness (ABS 2003).

In very remote areas only 3.8 per cent of males and 5.7 per cent of females (15–24 years old) were attending some kind of tertiary education institution. Comparatively across Australia 24.3 per cent of males and 26.1 per cent of females in this age group were in some form of tertiary education (ABS 2003). While “lack of transport” is likely to be only a part of the reason for these issues a discrepancy is clearly apparent.

The higher costs associated with rural travel can be difficult to afford when a young person has no job.

However access to job opportunities is limited if they have no access to transport. Figure 2.7 illustrates how lack of transport can impact on young people’s lives.

Figure 2.7: Lack of transport in rural areas can impact on life opportunities.



Source: Booz Allen Hamilton 2003 based on CTA 2002.

Lack of access to other facilities

A range of other issues emerge when young people are limited in access to facilities and services as a result of limited transport options. Access to health services is a major concern, particularly when it concerns access to personally sensitive medical advice in areas such as sex related issues. As a study of health issues for rural young people in South Australia (Mid North Regional Health Services SA 2003) noted:

Transport was considered a major barrier in accessing services in all consultations. With many young people residing outside their main town their only form of transport is the school bus or their parents.

Clearly these forms of transport are not suitable when a person is seeking confidential access to advice on sensitive issues. This was a major concern of Victorian rural young people (Dept. of Victorian Communities 2003):

Key issues in smaller towns include: adequate transport to and from (health) services, sufficient outreach services and concerns about anonymity and privacy when accessing services.

A wider range of health access issues emerge when the centralisation and rationalisation of health facilities is considered. As noted earlier, Bragg and Reedy (2001), have noted a growth in the number, distance and complexity of trips accessing health services in rural NSW due to closure of clinics. Given the problems identified in this Chapter in relation to youth access to transport, one might be concerned that the need for travel is increasing in such a sensitive and important area as health.

2.3 National statistics

National statistical data can assist in understanding the context and scale of transport need. They provide a quantitative basis from which some of the previous, more qualitative, research on transport need can be considered. This section provides an overview of available national statistical data regarding young people in rural and regional Australia. It covers:

- the population of rural and regional Australia;

- young people and rural and regional Australia;
- young people unemployment and income; and
- young people and education.

2.3.1 The population of rural and regional Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has divided up Australia into remoteness regions to explore the distribution of population in rural and regional areas (ABS 2001 cat. no. 1216.0)². Table 2.5 (page 16) shows the spread of region types across Australian States and Territories and the relative population share for each region. This illustrates that:

- some 31 per cent or 5.9 million of Australia's population is considered to be regional whilst 2.9 per cent or 529 000 people live in remote and very remote areas;
- most Australians living in regional Australia reside in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. Together these States account for 78 per cent of regional Australia;
- Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory account for 77 per cent of the population living in remote Australia (and 82 per cent of very remote Australia); and
- whilst some States and Territory's have lower populations than the larger States some are characterised by high proportions of regional and remote area populations:
 - Tasmania has the highest share of State population in regional areas (97 per cent) with the remainder being considered remote;
 - some 53 per cent of the Northern Territory's population is considered outer regional with the remainder being remote;
 - some 44 per cent of Queensland's population is defined as regional; and
 - the Northern Territory has the highest State/Territory share of remote area population (47 per cent) followed by Western Australia (nine per cent).

² For a full discussion of how ABS has determined the remoteness regions see ABS Cat 1244.0 "Information Paper: ABS Views on Remoteness" 2001.

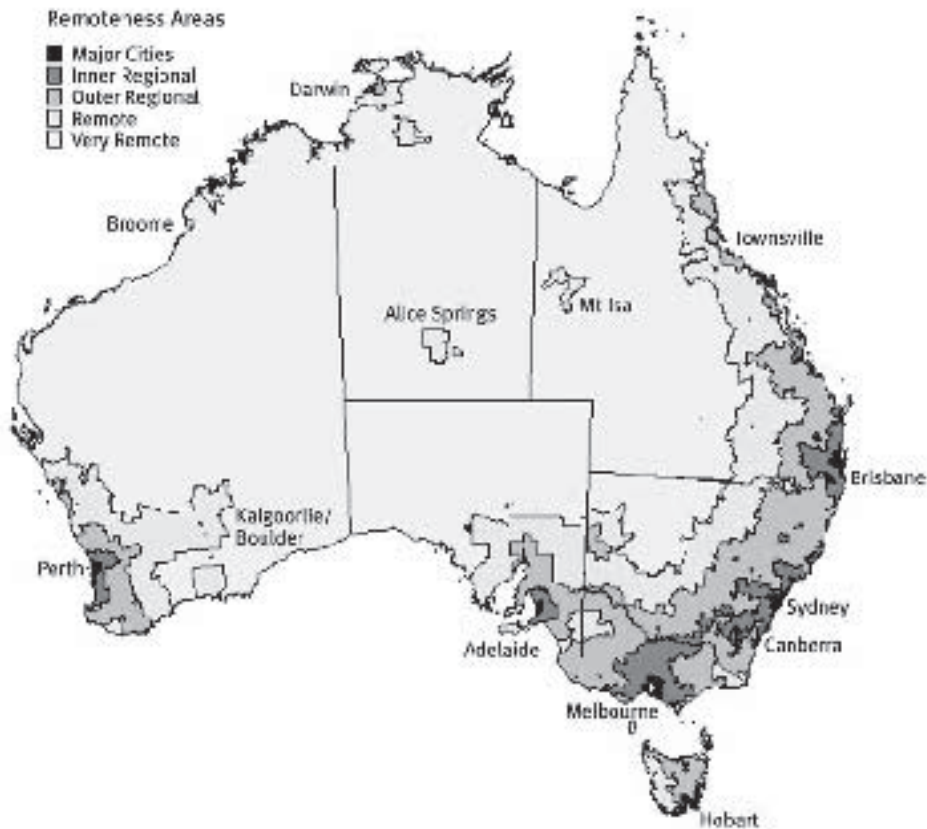
Table 2.5: Australia’s rural and regional population distribution (2001)

State/Territory	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	Total (ooo)		
	%	%	%	%	%	Total	Regional	Remote
New South Wales	71.1	20.6	7.5	0.6	0.1	6,311	1,773	44
Victoria	73.5	21	5.4	0.1	–	4,612	1,218	5
Queensland	52	25.7	18	2.7	1.6	3,586	1,567	154
South Australia	71.6	12.3	11.9	3.1	1.1	1,459	353	61
Western Australia	69.7	11.8	9.6	5.3	3.4	1,832	392	159
Tasmania	–	63.6	33.8	1.9	0.6	455	443	11
Northern Territory	–	–	52.5	21.7	24.8	203	106	94
ACT	99.8	0.2	–	–	–	309	–	–
Australia(a)	65.9	20.6	10.5	1.8	1.1	18,769	5,853	529

Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001 cat. no. 1216.0.
 (a) Includes persons in other Territories.

Figure 2.8 shows the definition of these regions based on the ABS categories.

Figure 2.8: Australian city, regional and remote areas (ABS 2001)



Source: ABS

2.3.2 Young people and rural and regional Australia

Table 2.6 shows an analysis of the proportion of young people (aged 15–24) by the ABS defined remote area regions of Australia.

Table 2.6: Australia's rural and regional young population distribution (2001)

State/Territory	Major cities	Inner regional	Outer regional	Remote	Very remote	Total (ooo)		
	%	%	%	%	%	Total	Regional	Remote
New South Wales	72.9	19.9	6.6	0.5	0.1	1,192	315	7
Victoria	74.8	20.4	4.8	0.1	–	887	223	1
Queensland	54.8	24.0	17.3	2.3	1.5	696	288	27
South Australia	73.9	11.5	10.7	2.7	1.1	269	60	10
Western Australia	72.9	11.0	8.8	4.3	3.0	367	73	27
Tasmania	–	67.4	30.7	1.4	0.5	86	84	2
Northern Territory	–	–	51.2	19.7	29.1	42	22	21
ACT	99.8	0.2	–	–	–	68	0	–
Australia(a)	67.9	19.8	9.7	1.6	1.1	3,607	1,064	94
per cent young people	19.8	18.4	17.7	16.7	19.8	19.2	18.2	17.9

Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001 cat. no. 1216.0.

(a) Includes persons in other Territories.

This indicates that:

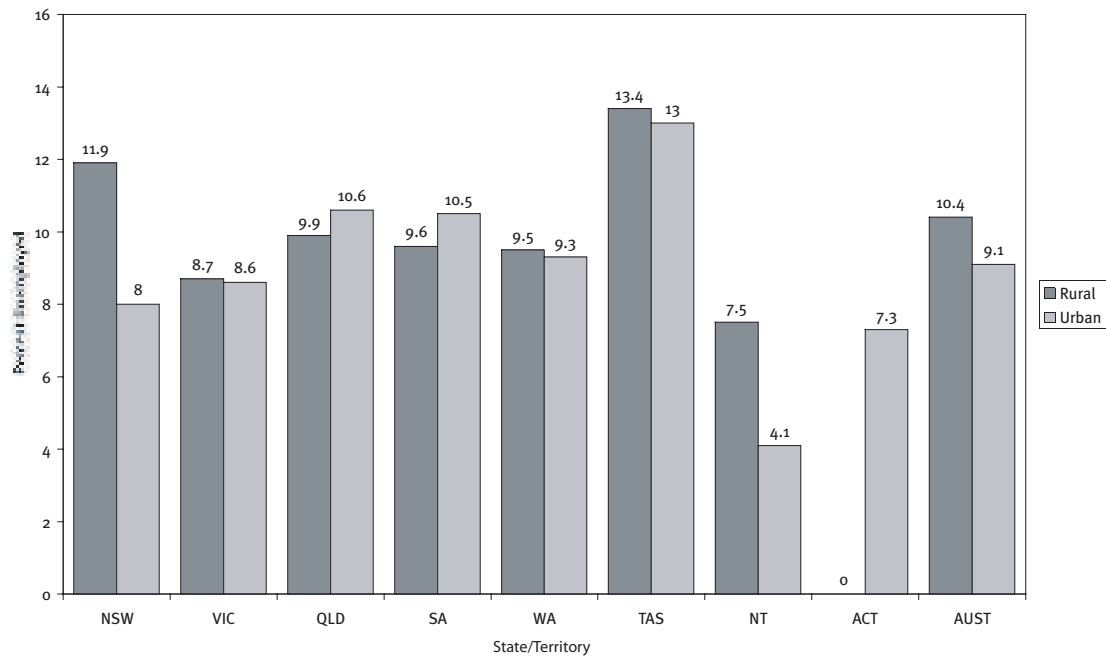
- there are over 3.6 million Australians who can be defined as young people;
- around 1.2 million or 6.4 per cent of all Australians are young people living in regional and remote areas;
- around a third of all young Australians live in regional and remote areas;
- in general a higher proportion of the population in major cities (19.8 per cent) are young people compared to regional (19.2 per cent) and remote areas (17.9 per cent);
- most young people living in rural and regional Australia live in regional areas (88 per cent);
- some 34,000 young Australians live in very remote areas, mostly in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland; and

- although in general, rural and regional Australia has lower proportions of young people than the national average (19.2 per cent), the following parts of rural and regional Australia have higher than average proportions of the population in this group:
 - inner regional ACT (27.3 per cent);
 - very remote Northern Territory (24.4 per cent); and
 - very remote NSW (20.8 per cent).

2.3.3 Young people unemployment and income

A higher share of young people living in rural and regional Australia are unemployed than those who live in urban areas (Figure 2.9 on page 18).

Figure 2.9: Unemployment in the 18–25 year age group – urban vs rural and regional Australia



Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001.

: In this case rural and regional areas have been defined on a Local Government Area (LGA) basis. Rural areas in these examples includes rural and regional areas including remote areas.

This indicates that:

- overall unemployment rates are higher in rural and regional areas (10.4 per cent compared to 9.1 per cent in urban areas);
- unemployment rates for young people in the Northern Territory and NSW are significantly higher in rural areas than in urban areas. In the Northern Territory unemployment rates are 80 per cent higher than urban rates. They are almost 50 per cent higher in NSW;
- unemployment rates are also higher for young people living in rural and regional areas in Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria; and
- in Queensland and South Australia urban unemployment rates are slightly higher than in rural and regional areas.

Figure 2.10 (page 19) shows the unemployment rates for young people by Local Government Area

throughout Australia. In this case darker shading refers to higher youth unemployment levels. This indicates that:

- there are notable darker shaded strips (higher unemployment rates) in the coastal strips of NSW and Queensland;
- in general Tasmania is noticeably darker (has higher unemployment rates) than the rest of Australia; and
- some rural and regional parts of Australia have higher unemployment rates in the 18–25 year age group:
 - South West Western Australia;
 - North Metropolitan South Australia;
 - Western Victoria and Gippsland;
 - Central and Northern/Coastal NSW;
 - most of Coastal Queensland and parts of Western Queensland; and
 - most of Tasmania.

Figure 2.10: Unemployment in the 18–25 year age group – Local Government Areas throughout Australia

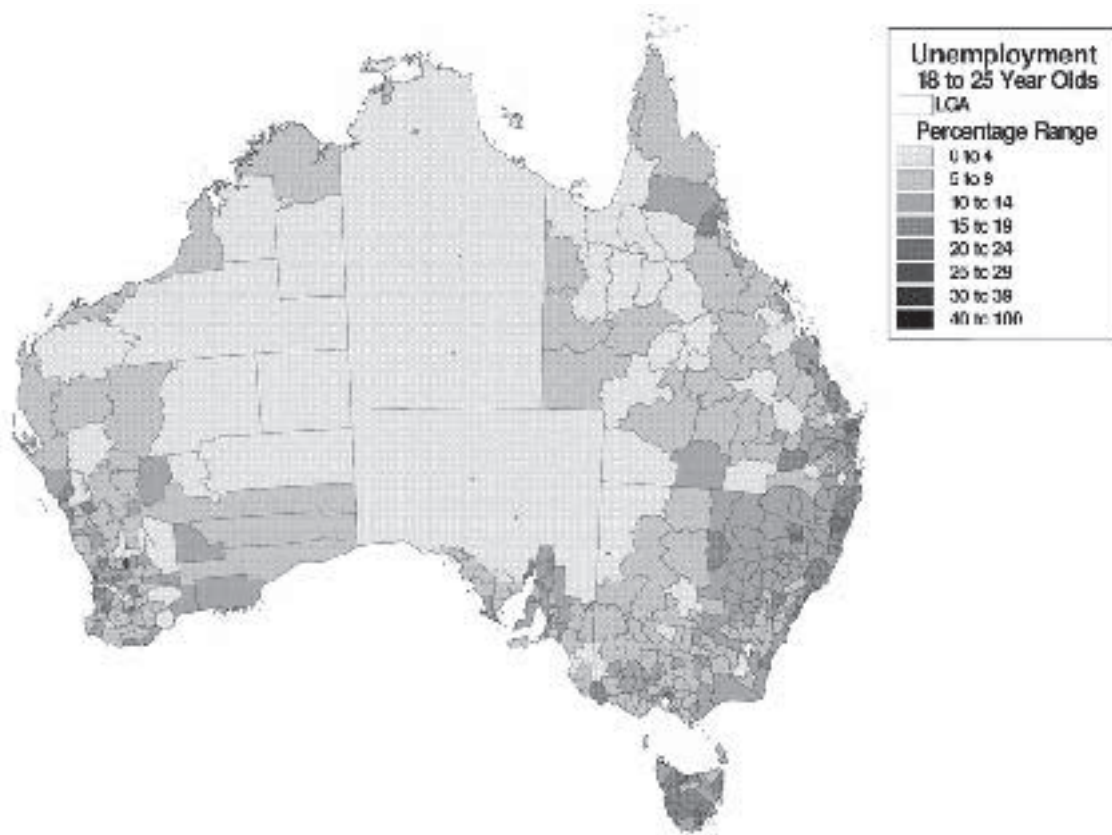
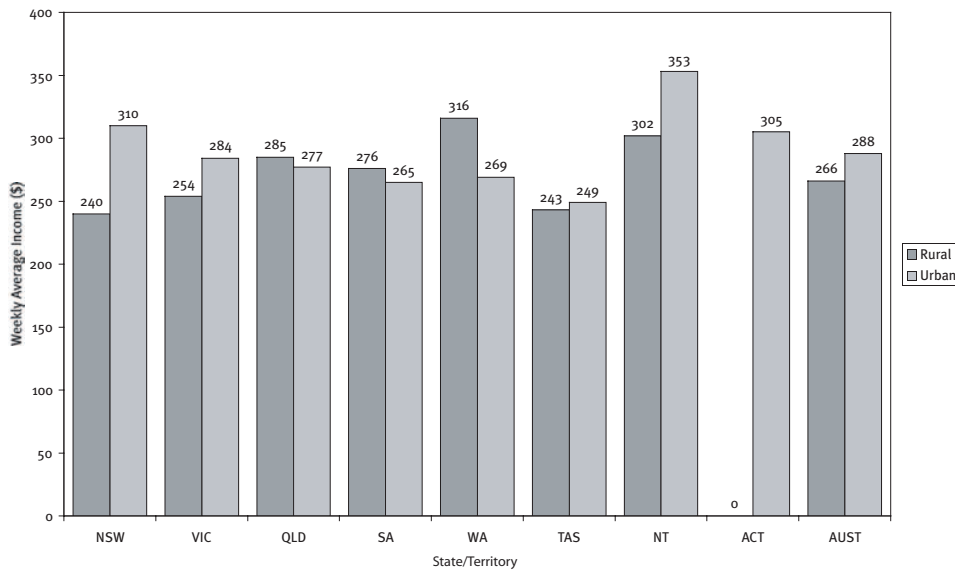


Figure 2.11 (page 20) shows average weekly incomes for young people aged between 18–25 living in urban and rural and regional areas. This indicates that:

- overall young people aged 15–25 living in rural and regional areas earn about \$22 a week (or eight per cent) less than their urban counterparts;
- this rural to urban difference is significantly higher in NSW and the Northern Territory. In NSW urban young people earn \$70 (or 23 per cent) extra than those in rural and regional areas. In the Northern Territory urban young people earn \$51 (or 15 per cent) more than rural and regional young people;
- an earnings disadvantage for young people in rural compared to urban areas is evident also in Victoria and Tasmania; and
- in Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia, young people earn slightly more in rural and regional areas than they would in urban areas.

Figure 2.11: Average weekly incomes in the 18–25 year age group – urban vs rural and regional Australia



Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001.

: In this case rural and regional areas have been defined on an LGA basis.

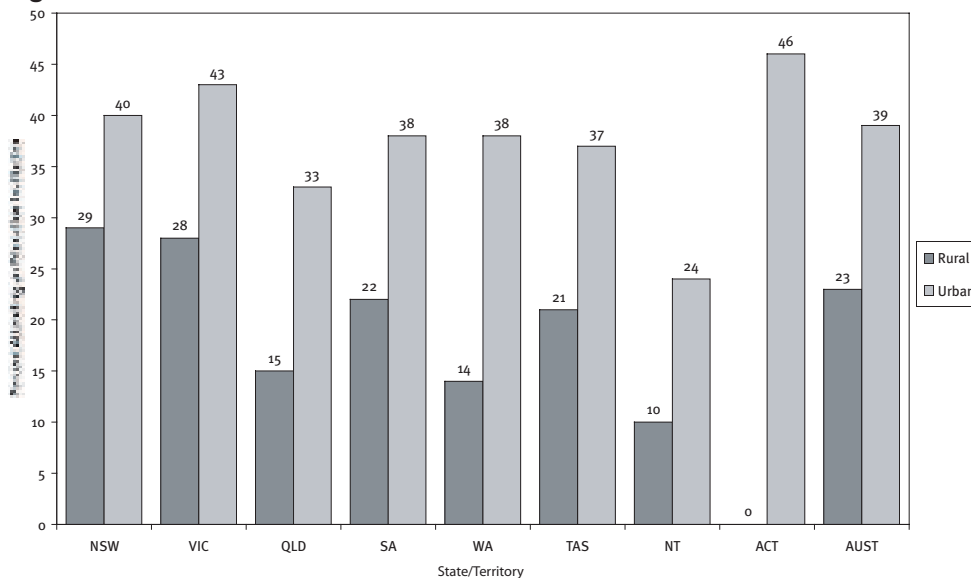
: Weekly income is approximated based on the mid point of income ranges where data available.

Lower earnings for young people in rural and regional settings are a particular concern due to higher travel costs incurred in these settings compared to urban areas. To some extent this issue must be assessed relative to a wider range of cost of living indicators. Accommodation, for example, may be significantly more expensive in urban settings.

2.3.4 Young people and education

There is a significant difference in education participation rates between young people in urban areas and those residing in rural and regional Australia (Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12: Persons attending educational institutions – 18–25 year age group – urban vs rural and regional Australia



Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001.

: In this case rural and regional areas have been defined on an LGA basis.

This indicates that:

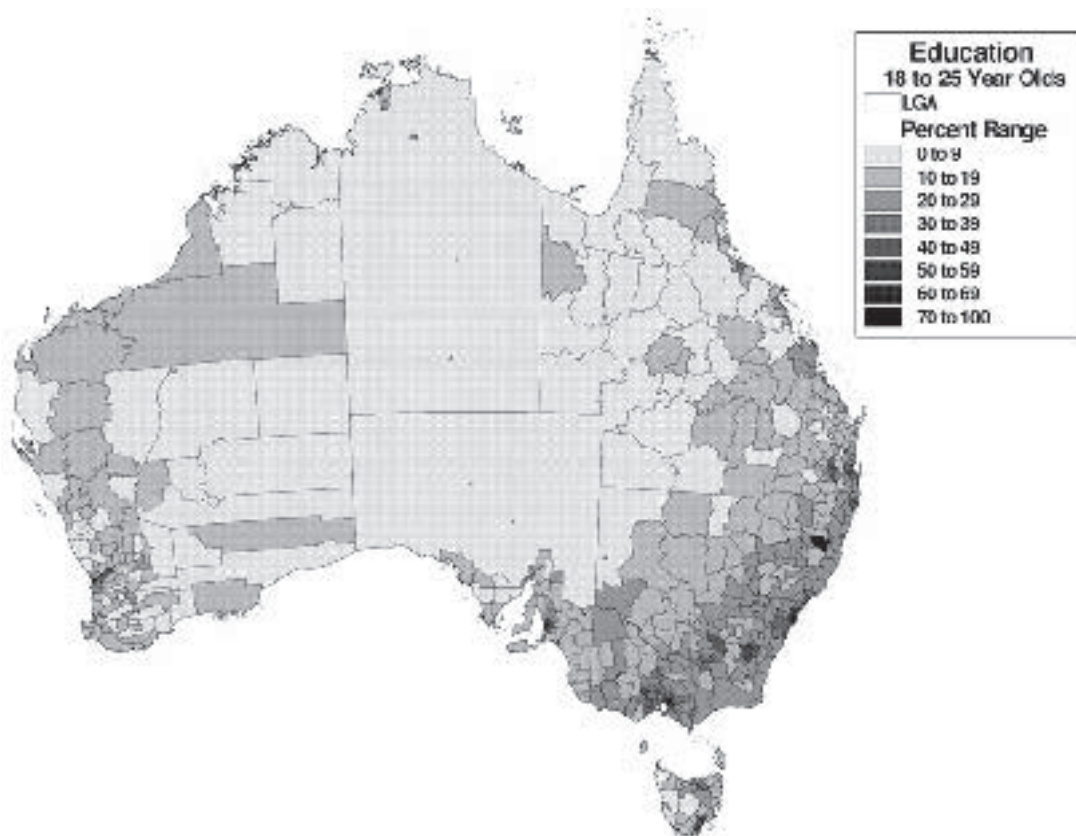
- 16 per cent more young people aged 18–25 in urban areas attend educational institutions than those in rural areas. The participation rate in urban areas is 70 per cent higher than the rural and regional participation rate;
- every Australian State and Territory has a significant gap of this type;
- the gap is particularly severe in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. In Western Australia the participation rate in urban areas is 170 per cent higher than that in the rural area. The same statistic for

Queensland is 120 per cent and 140 per cent for the Northern Territory; and

- NSW and Victoria have the lowest education participation gaps between urban areas and regional and rural areas. Nevertheless participation rates for young people are still significantly different.

Figure 2.13 shows the education participation rates by Local Government Area throughout Australia. In this case darker shading refers to greater levels of participation. Areas with lighter shading are the main concern.

Figure 2.13: Education participation in the 18–25 year age group – Local Government Areas throughout Australia



Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001.

This indicates that:

- there is a distinct trend towards darker shading (higher youth education participation rates) in the major urban centres of Australia;
- remote parts of Australia stand out with significantly lower participation rates. The whole of the Northern Territory, remoter parts of Western Australia, Queensland, NSW, South

Australia and Tasmania have significantly lower levels of participation; and

- in effect there is a pattern indicating higher participation on the more populous south-eastern areas of Australia.

This data clearly illustrates low education participation rates in rural and regional Australia.

While the case that lack of access to transport has some part to play in this issue, it is unlikely that transport issues are the only factors involved. Higher education is naturally concentrated in a few more centralised locations. These tend to be located in urban rather than rural and regional settings. There is also the possibility that many young people relocate to major urban centres to participate in higher education. In this case they would be represented as urban area residents in this data.

2.4 The views of young people

Community consultation was undertaken as part of this project with the aim of providing input from young people and their carers regarding existing transport issues and problems which they experience in rural and regional Australia. The consultations were managed as an independent review by the consultants and confidentiality of responses was assured to respondents as part of the process³.

Responses were obtained via the following processes:

- written invitations to make submissions were invited through a mail out to agencies involved in managing facilities or activities for young people throughout Australia;
- a Call for Submissions was advertised on web sites and through publications related to young people. Many of these media were made available for the project by members of the NYARS steering committee; and
- submissions were made via two means:
 - through a web based questionnaire available at the study web site (<http://www.ruralityouthtrans.com/>); and

- through emails and email attachments associated with the study web site.

The mail out was undertaken in late October 2003. Submissions were planned to close on December 1st, however this deadline was extended for an additional week following a number of specific requests.

Some 153 responses were received all from rural and regional areas. This was considered a good volume of responses given the approach adopted. Most responses (81) were from youth workers of many types. This group included some people working in transport although this was related to youth transport. Some 60 responses were received from young people. All ages between 13 and 25 were represented although most responses were from young people in the 15–20 age group.

Inputs from young people received during the consultations are summarised in the following sections:

- transport issues and problems; and
- impacts of transport problems on young people.

2.4.1 Transport issues and problems

The first question in the web based questionnaire asked respondents:

Do young people in your area have any issues or problems with local transport? If yes please explain what these are?

Some 146 yes responses were returned including four no responses and two don't knows. Table 2.7 presents a summary of the transport issues and problems identified in responses to this question.

Table 2.7: Young people in rural and regional Australia – transport issues and problems

Transport mode	Comment	Frequency of comment
Public transport	No public transport, lack of public transport.	86
	Poor public transport area coverage/areas not covered.	48
	No night or early morning services, poor service span.	39
	Fare too high to use for young people.	36
	Services too irregular, low service frequency.	28
	Lack of weekend services.	17
	Concession fares not available.	8
	Unreliable buses.	8
	Poor interchange coordination between buses.	7
	Indirect long travel time by bus.	4

³ We quote many of the responses in the following section. However some have been adjusted slightly to make identification of individuals impossible. We have, however, identified the communities where submissions have been received from.

Table 2.7 continued

Public transport cont.	Public transport not accessible to disabled persons.	4
	No access to available school bus.	3
	Unsafe to travel by bus.	3
	No access to bus since it is for Aboriginal travellers.	1
	Buses run at difficult times.	1
	Poor quality public transport.	1
	Poor awareness of bus services.	1
Car (driver/lift)	Very dependent on parents/others to get around via lifts.	31
	Insurance/petrol costs too high for young drivers.	6
	Need to rely on hitchhiking, this is unreliable and can be dangerous/unsafe.	5
	Very long car travel distances for parents – takes too much of their time.	4
	Low car ownership.	3
	People drink and drive since there is no other option.	1
Taxi	Taxi too expensive.	10
	Taxi difficult to get/cannot get.	4
Walk	Need to walk long-distances.	5
Bike	No bike paths.	2
Community transport	No access to community transport.	4

Source: Phase 1 Consultation Submissions – from young people and youth workers in rural and regional Australia.

The lack of an available public transport system was a major issue dominating the responses. To quote one response:

We have no public transport at all. If you do not drive you cannot get around and considering the distances this creates problems.

(Southwood, South Australia)

Submissions highlighted parts of regional towns or villages which the bus service didn't reach and the lack of links between towns and villages. Lack of night and weekend services were points made on a number of occasions.

Even where public transport was available, many submissions noted that fares were expensive for a young person.

. . . total cost of (bus) travel for our students to and from the course is \$56 a fortnight. All participants receive Centrelink benefits ranging from \$270–\$310 per fortnight. This represents a fifth or a sixth of their total income.

(Wodonga, Victoria)

The low frequency and occasional nature of some bus services was seen as a major barrier. One youth

worker highlighted that transport difficulties could result in breaches on Centrelink rules for the “work for the dole” scheme:

The project I run, being outdoors, starts at 6.00 a.m. in the morning to avoid the worst of the heat. There is no public transport at this time in this area of NSW. Also, if the project gets rained out for the day many of the participants are unable to get home. This causes them stress, and sadly many people I have had on my projects fail to be able to afford/gain transport and thus are in breach of Centrelink rules for non-compliance.

(Wagga Wagga, New South Wales)

The reliance on family and friends for getting lifts was another major feature of the responses made.

. . . dependency on friends and family for transport is fraught with difficulties re: negotiation, availability, abuse of favours and other people having to bear our transport costs.

(Wodonga, Victoria)

For some family members, providing lifts to enable important trips to be made was extremely difficult due to the long-distances involved:

Most young people in this district have to attend boarding school for their secondary education. The buses only run three times a week and leave at 3.00 a.m., making it difficult to come home for weekends. My parents have to drive 3¹/₂ hours to pick me up from school and another 3¹/₂ to bring me back. It makes for a very short weekend at home. There is a bus but it is a 2¹/₂ hour drive for my parents to get to the bus stop. Dad has to take the time away from his work as Mum doesn't have a licence. I can only come home every second weekend and I hate spending the other weekends in school.

(Rolleston, Qld)

Several submissions made it clear that access to a private car was the main means of finding solutions to transport problems for young people. As one respondent put it:

... if you don't have your licence you're stuffed.
(Crystal Brook, South Australia)

Walking was seen as the only practical means of travel for some. However the distances and difficulties this could entail for some people were considerable:

Jenny is a young single mother living five kilometres out of a small regional town. She chose to live in the former share farmer's cottage because the accommodation is cheap and suits her tight budget. The local Maternal and Child Health Nurse suggested Jenny may enjoy a new parent's support group. In order to attend this group, she walks five kilometres into town, pushing her child's stroller as there is no other means of transport available to her.

(Wangaratta, Victoria)

Another example also suggests considerable difficulties:

Young people are currently facing a 20-minute walk (approximately) from over a distance of at

least 4–5 kilometres, often in 40 degree heat to get to and from the junior and senior campuses of one of the local colleges – both situated at opposite ends of town. Plus having to carry their increasingly heavy school bags with text books, change of clothes for sport activities etc.⁴

(Mount Isa, Queensland)

A range of safety issues associated with walking were identified including the following:

There is 'No access to after hours activities in the central city area unless they walk. This can be a problem late at night in terms of safety.'

(Albany, WA)

Some of the written submissions highlighted transport issues associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities living in remote settlements. The serviceability of remote airstrips was a concern for flying doctor service access for all the community as well as for young people living in those communities. Unemployment and the resulting low income make ownership of a car impossible for many Indigenous people and access to public transport is considered quite impractical in many remote settlements. Poor quality of roads and infrastructure in these areas was also as an important transport issue.

2.4.2 Impacts of transport problems on young people

The second question in the web questionnaire was:

What sorts of problems does the lack of available transport cause for young people in your area?

Table 2.8 (page 25) summarises the results of the responses to this question. It also includes summaries of comments related to this issue made in written submissions.

⁴ Authors Note: It is impossible to walk 4–5 kilometres in 20 minutes. The average walking speed is around 4–5 kilometres an hour and a 4–5 kilometre trip in 20 minutes assumes a minimum walk speed of 12 kilometres an hour. We must therefore conclude that either the walk distance is exaggerated or the walk time under estimated in this statement.

Table 2.8: Impacts of transport problems on young people in rural and regional Australia

Comment	Frequency of comment
Restrict education and employment opportunities ⁵ .	93
Restricted social opportunities.	90
Restricted service (e.g. medical) opportunities.	52
Isolation, insularity.	52
Car dependency, reliance on others, no independence.	32
Stress/dismay.	28
Early age drinking/mischief.	25
Car purchase results in debt problems.	13
Arrive late to work, school or appointment.	13
Unsafe behaviours e.g. hitchhiking.	11
Drink drive.	9
Unlicensed driving.	8
Unsafe walking long-distances.	7
Strain on accommodation near education and employment centres.	6
Poor drive skills/driver fatigue – accidents.	6
People leave township.	4

Source: Phase 1 Consultation Submissions – from young people and youth workers in rural and regional Australia.

The most common comment, raised by almost all submissions in one form or another, was that lack of access to transport restricted educational, employment and social opportunities. Some quotes are rather illuminating in this regard:

... employers discriminate against young people in our postcode because they believe they will be unreliable in turning up for work due to poor transport, young people find it difficult to access recreational opportunities especially at night and on weekends, parents have to be a ferry service, young people often do not get to access recreational opportunities as parents cannot afford the petrol, young people engage in unsafe practices e.g. hitchhiking.

(Aldinga, South Australia)

Employment is a big issue young people have no way of accessing employment without family travelling back and forwards 50 ks or more. Centrelink is 50 ks away no transport. Any chance of part-time or full-time work, TAFE or further studies is 50+ ks. Recreation is also hard without public transport and if our young people can't access other areas of entertainment they get bored and this can lead to risk-taking behaviours.

(Waroona, Western Australia)

Reduced social contact and socialisation was a frequently raised issue.

Young people are unable to go into "town" due to being at school during the week, which results in lack of socialisation, such as going to the movies with friends. Also young people are not able to get certain items they may want or need, such as clothes or presents for friends. Also lack of transport makes it hard to access your own bank. Lack of transport on the weekends results in young people becoming incredibly bored, and therefore partaking in activities that they would probably not do otherwise, such as roaming the streets and drinking at a very young age.

(Shuttleworth, Victoria)

The link between unsocial behaviour and being bored as a result of lack of access to transport was raised on many occasions:

The combination of boredom and no transport often results in young people turning to negative behaviours including drug abuse, vandalism, bullying and depression.

(Clare, South Australia)

Youth get bored, so act out doing stupid things like hooning around and vandalism. Even one shuttle back and forth at night time would give the

⁵ 44 per cent of these responses mentioned restrictions to both education and employment, 32 per cent employment alone and 24 per cent educational alone.

youth something else to do that was cheap and affordable, without having to rely on anyone else.

(Yeppoon, Queensland)

One young person was particularly frank about the causes of antisocial behaviour:

. . . we had nothing to do in Margate so when we were stuck down there we got bored really easily, so that's when we got up to mischief. We got on the piss, broke things, stole things, drove cars with no licences, etc. I can't blame all of this on the transport situation, but it did contribute to some of the things we did. Even when we did have our licences, if we wanted to go and have a

few beers or something in town, we had no way of getting home until the next morning.

(Margate, Tasmania)

One set of consequences of lack of transport was unsafe behaviours such as drink driving, use of hitchhiking or long walks at night:

A few years ago a young girl was murdered (unsolved) while hitchhiking home from her place of work instead of waiting three hours until the next bus! Families are not willing to let their young ones take risks of having to wait for buses.

(Maclean, New South Wales)

3 Transport services in rural and regional Australia

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter describes the transport services currently available in rural and regional areas. It includes a review of the Australian community transport sector undertaken as part of the project. A summary of national data on usage of transport in rural and regional areas is also presented.

3.2 Transport options

The private car is the principal travel option for those living in rural and regional areas. Not all young people can drive and few can afford the costs involved in buying and running a car. Many rely on lifts although this requires organising travel around others.

Walking and cycling are valid options for travel within some regional centres. However this is an impractical option for most residents of rural and regional Australia due to the distances involved. Weather and environment issues such as heat stress, cold, rain and hilly terrain can also act as barriers to walk and cycle travel in many parts of Australia.

Table 3.1 (page 28) is a summary of the types of passenger transport services available in rural and regional areas. It includes a description of services and details the service providers and associated government roles. Within urban regional centres a local bus service of some kind is often provided although service levels are rarely better than a bus an hour and it is rare to find trips provided in

the evening and on weekends (this was identified in Chapter 2 as a critical time for travel by young people). Typically not all parts of regional centres are covered by bus services of this type. Many areas have no services at all.

Regional centres also have taxi services of some type. These services are usually regulated by government authorities with the number of licenses being limited to ensure a reasonable income to providers. Fares and service quality are also regulated under these terms. Deregulated taxi minibus services operate in the Northern Territory although most Australian jurisdictions have conventional taxi hire services.

Long-distance services typically operate to and from interchange areas at regional centres. This includes long-distance and rural and regional bus services. Some regional urban centres have regional and long-distance rail connections and even air services in remoter areas. It is rare to see any of these services used for local transport since they are designed for long-distance travel.

It is common to find a substantial community transport sector in regional urban centres. A diverse range of services are provided in Australia ranging from organised scheduled transport services to one-off trips for groups by self-help organisations and individuals.

In remote and non-urban areas school bus services are typically the only transport service available.

These are generally strictly limited for child travel to school. It is rare to find them available to a wider group of passengers and also rare to find them available for more than travel to school.

An informal community transport type arrangement sometimes operates in remoter communities often

with local people sharing lifts. In some remoter communities special minibus trips to town are organised by community leaders. A commercial long-distance taxi bus service operates to communities in the Northern Territory but this is an exception rather than the rule for remoter areas.

Table 3.1: Transport services available in rural and regional areas

Transport type	Operator/regulation	Service features
Scheduled public transport		
Regional centre bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly run by private operators • Some jurisdictions subsidise service levels/fares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally low frequency (hourly services) • Typically services are based around school bus services i.e. buses used for school bus runs are then used for general services in the middle of the day • Rare to have services in the evening and weekend • Typical to find parts of areas not covered by services
Inter-regional bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by private operators • Mix of commercial (long-distance) and subsidised services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically a few trips a week • Not for local travel • Fares are generally high (commercial) • Some services timed to make connections with rail to major centres hence timing can be during the night
Regional “village to town” bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by private operators • Mix of commercial (long-distance) and subsidised services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually a few trips a week • Not for local travel • Fares medium to high
Regional rail services (including inter-State rail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All run by State-based rail authorities • Services levels and fares subsidised by government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of several services a day to occasional services in remote areas • Rarely for local travel • Service timings often fit long-distance travel to a major city i.e. very early a.m.
Regional air services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private airlines • Some subsidies provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very long-distance services • Frequency ranges from a few services a day to a few a week • Not for local travel
School bus services		
School bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by private operators • Funded by State/Territory Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of fare paying and free services. Free services for longer distance children • Some subsidies provided to encourage parent drop off and pick up to buses • Single weekday a.m. in trip and single p.m. return home • Sometimes bus trip times can be long • Mainly for child school access – rarely available for wider community use

Table 3.1 continued

Special school bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by private operators with government funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special services to enable access by disabled children living in regional areas to urban schools
Taxi services		
Taxi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by private companies • Some subsidies available fares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided in regional centres. Little/no services in rural and remoter areas • Special subsidies for groups including disabled persons available in some areas • Booking times can include long waits in most areas
Community transport services		
Community transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large mix of service types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranges from organised services to self-help groups • Includes health and community services run by State and local government groups

3.3 The Australian community transport sector

The community transport sector is seen to have major potential to assist in ameliorating transport issues for young people in rural and regional areas. Hence a separate review of community transport services was undertaken as part of this project.

By its very nature, this sector of transport is difficult to study since it is based on self-help groups and even individuals finding shared solutions in often remote areas. Also every regional centre has many services of this type. Even individual homesteads in remote areas run some form of community transport including the occasional sharing of lifts. The scale and widespread distribution of these sorts of activities throughout Australia is a potentially enormous sector to study.

This review has focused on jurisdictional approaches to the sector with selected summaries of service types provided. It is not a comprehensive review of the sector and does not attempt to describe all services throughout Australia.

3.3.1 Overview

In Australia community transport is made up of a diverse range of types and forms of transport and comprises both informal and some formal transport networks.

Most commonly, community transport is run by not-for-profit organisations providing services to people with disabilities, older people and other groups, including young people, who have a limited access to transport options.

The extent and cost of community transport

services is not well documented. This is a reflection of its localised nature, the diversity of service types and the variety of funding sources used.

Objectives and policies

Overall there seems to be very little direction for community transport in terms of specific objectives and policies. Community transport appears to be predominantly delivered in an ad hoc and bottom-up way. Very few States have a governing agency to provide guidance and direction for the development of community transport although some States are making moves towards such a framework. The exceptions to this are New South Wales and South Australia. In NSW community transport is seen as an efficient way to assist the rural transport disadvantaged, while in SA it is a delivery mechanism within an integrated regional transport planning framework.

Programs and funding arrangements

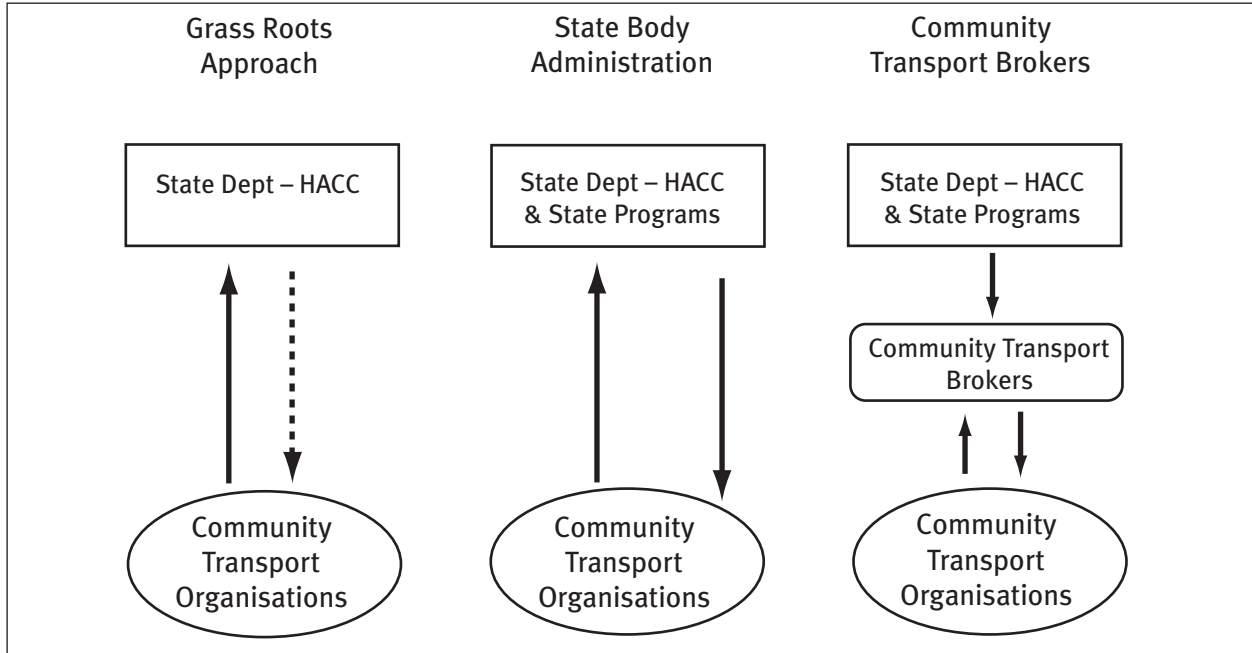
Community transport programs and funding arrangements vary widely between jurisdictions. However, common to all jurisdictions, is funding provided by the Australian Government through the Home and Community Care (HACC) program, and funding provided by the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Three States, NSW, SA and Victoria, provide community transport programs and funding in addition to the HACC and Department of Veteran Affairs programs. In the other jurisdictions there is generally no State Government body responsible for community transport provision. All community organisations rely on local government, one-off grants from government agencies, or corporate sponsorship and charitable donations for funding.

Structure and organisation

There are three community transport organisational approaches currently used to support regional community transport services (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Community transport organisational approaches



- *Grass roots approach:* Community organisations apply directly to the relevant HACC funding providers in their State or Territory, or obtain funding through local government, individual State departments or via corporate sponsorship. Under this approach community transport organisations may receive very little, if any, government funding;
- *State body administration:* This approach, currently used in NSW and Victoria, involves the State body administering a community transport program of funding. Community transport organisations are invited to apply to the State body for funding; and
- *Community transport brokers:* This approach, currently used in SA, involves the establishment of an intermediate level of community transport

“brokers” between the State government and the community transport organisations. This is a proactive approach which aims to provide an integrated approach to provision of transport services in the regions.

3.3.2 Service types for young people

The majority of community transport services are provided for the aged and people in the community with physical or mental impairments of various kinds. However a significant specialist sector caters for the specific needs of young people in rural and regional Australia. Table 3.2 (page 31) provides a summary of selected projects in NSW, Victoria and WA. There are many others in most jurisdictions. Some of these are described in further detail in Chapter 4.

Table 3.2: Selected community transport projects providing transport for young people in rural and regional Australia

Project	Funding	Service types	Trip types
New South Wales			
BAT Bus (Byron Area Travel Bus)	NSW Ministry of Transport – AAS Community Fundraising Small income from charging low fares	On-demand service, self-drive buses and vans, chartered buses, volunteers cars, hire taxis, brokerage of community buses – depends on size of group	Social activities and recreation
Hawkesbury Community Transport Service	Ministry of Transport – AAS	Cab-charge system Community buses provide door-to-door service after discos. Buses are hired to community organisations on weekends Driver training schemes (in future) Pool of family drivers give lifts to other children	Social and recreational activities
Youth on Wheels Inc	NSW Ministry of Transport and sponsored by Northern Rivers Community Transport	Brokerage of buses from operators and self-drive vehicle depending on needs. Demand responsive service.	Social, sporting, or recreational
Victoria			
Wimmera VET Bus	Vic. Department of Education and Training, School Focused Youth Service, Local Learning and Employment Network, Regional Youth Committee, schools and shires	Two fixed bus routes on a daily basis	Attend VET courses
Victorian Youth Access Bus Initiative	Initially from the Department of Education and Training	Initiative allows students to access spare seats on free school buses	Education and training programs
West Australia			
Runaway Bus	Corporate sponsorship, South West Coach Lines, South West regional development commission, shires	Provides a fixed route and timetable bus service One trip each way a day, \$5 fare	Taking young people (13–17 years) to the beach

3.4 Transport usage

There are no national travel surveys including travel by all modes and trip purposes in rural and regional Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics does include questions regarding the journey to work in the census as well as occasional surveys of travel in parts of Australia. The census also examines car ownership on a household basis. None of these sources identifies travel using community transport services due to its informal and difficult-to-monitor characteristics.

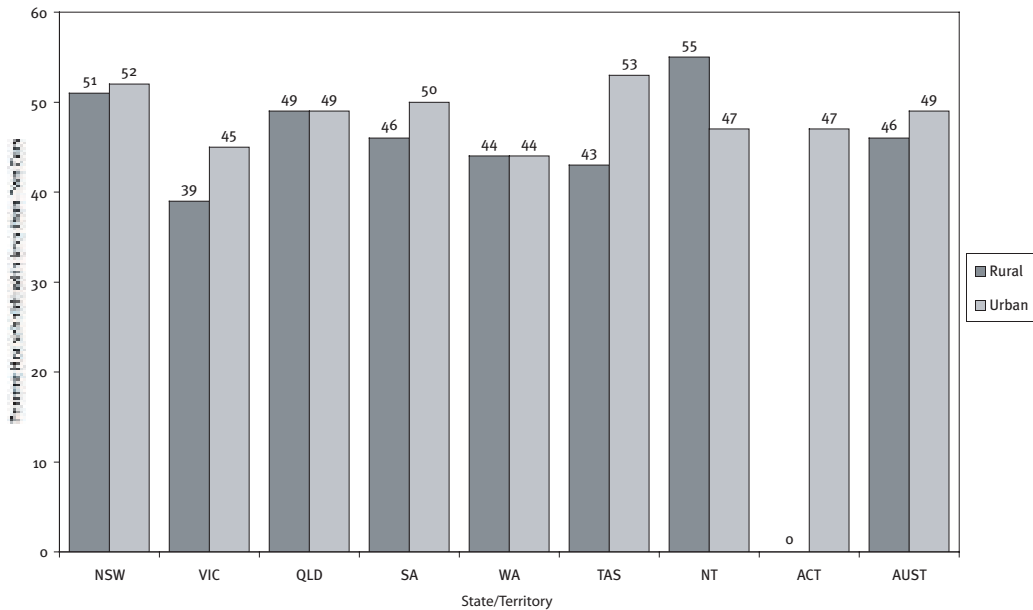
This section examines available data in these areas on a national basis.

3.4.1 Car ownership

As indicated earlier, access to the private car is the most significant factor in the availability of travel for young people. This includes access to lifts from friends and family members.

Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of households where zero or only one car is available. Both these cases are major concerns since they imply poor availability of the private car for other household members. Even when a single vehicle is available, it can imply only one worker in the household is using this for their commute. In this case other family members have no car available.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of households with less than two cars – urban vs rural and regional Australia



Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001.

: In this case rural and regional areas have been defined on an LGA basis.

This indicates that:

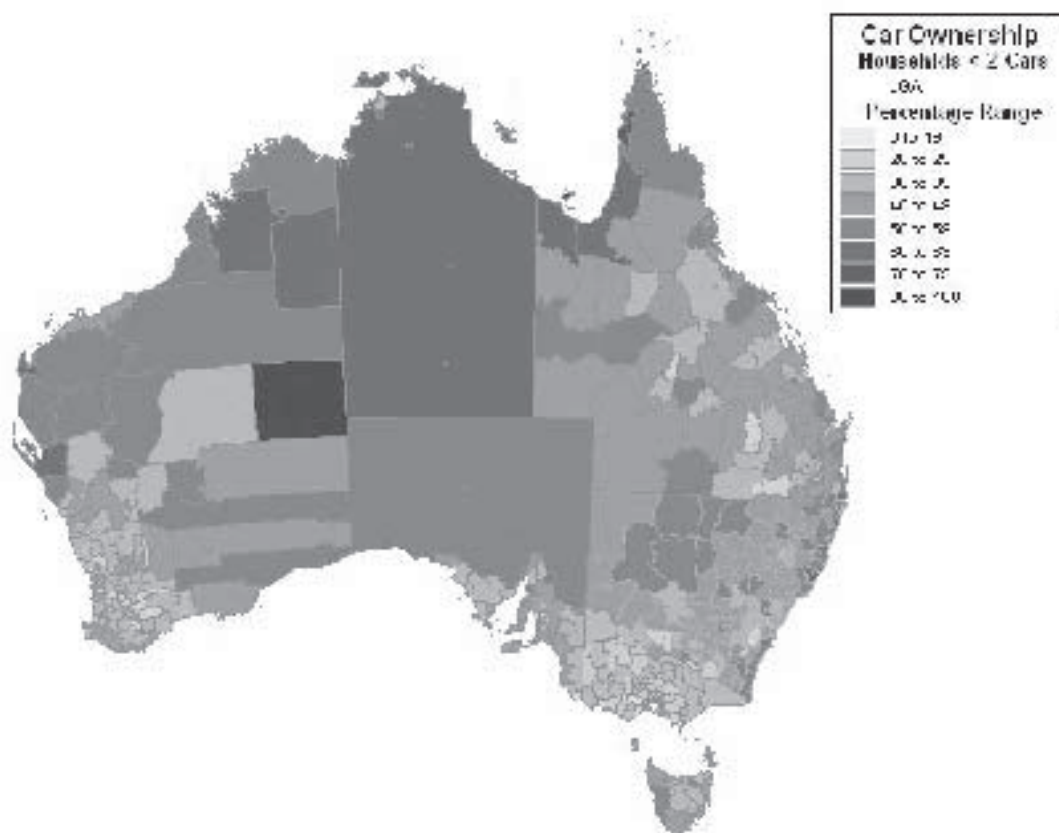
- it is significant that almost half of rural dwellings have zero or one car available;
- in general rural/regional households have a lower proportion of zero and no car households than urban dwellings; and
- the percentage of households with zero/one car is higher in Northern Territory rural areas than in Northern Territory urban areas.

Figure 3.3 (page 33) shows the percentage of households with less than two cars available for each Local Government Area (LGA) in Australia. In this case darker shading indicates larger number of households with zero or only one car available.

This indicates that:

- rural and regional Australia has particularly high concentrations of households with zero or only one car available;
- remote Australia, including the whole of the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia and parts of Queensland, NSW and Tasmania, have higher shares of households with zero or only one car available; and
- the major cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide stand out with lower shares of households with less than two cars available.

Figure 3.3: Percentage of households with less than two cars – Local Government Areas throughout Australia



Source: BAH analysis of ABS 2001.

3.4.2 Journey to work

Figure 3.4 (page 34) shows a comparison of travel mode to work for urban residents and rural and regional Australian residents.

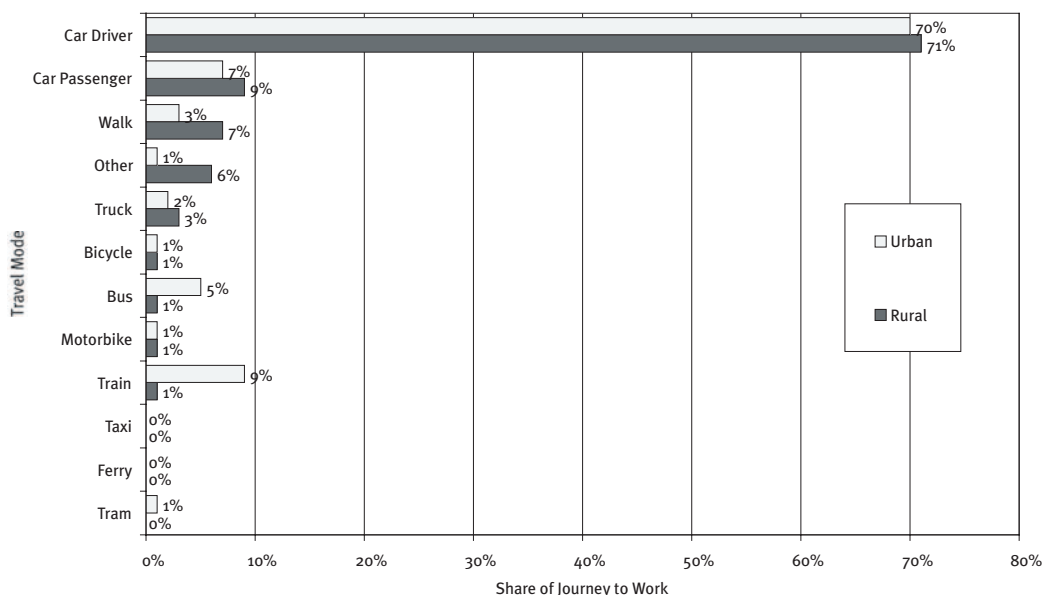
This indicates that:

- the private car dominates travel to work in both rural and urban settings;
- private car driving is slightly more common in rural and regional areas;
- car passenger travel (getting lifts) is significantly higher in rural and regional areas. Car passenger

travel is about 30 per cent higher in rural than urban areas;

- walking is however the most significantly higher travel option in rural and regional areas. More than twice as much walk access to work is occurring in rural and regional areas compared to urban areas; and
- public transport use is significantly higher in urban areas. It represents 15 per cent of urban travel but only two per cent of rural and regional travel.

Figure 3.4: Comparison of census journey to work by mode – urban and rural and regional Australia



Source: BAH Analysis of 2001 Census Journey to Work.

Note: Rural and regional data included in a joint group in this analysis.

3.4.3 Other travel surveys

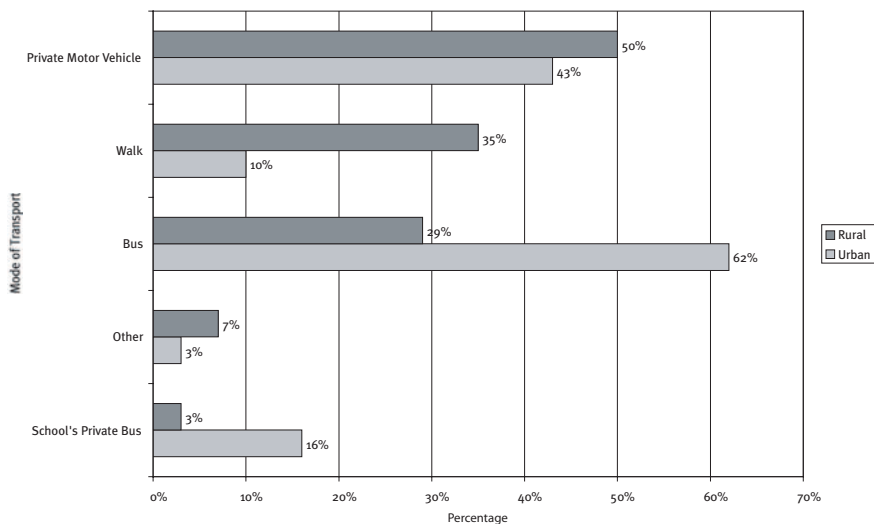
The Australian Bureau of Statistics has undertaken ad hoc surveys of transport, some of which have covered travel in rural and regional areas.

school in both rural and urban areas of Tasmania through an ABS ad hoc survey in 1997 (ABS 1997). The figure illustrates that urban and rural areas have quite different travel patterns. In urban areas bus is clearly the dominant travel mode followed by private motor vehicles and private school buses. While in rural areas the private motor vehicle followed by walk and bus are the dominant modes.

Tasmania – transport to educational institutions

Figure 3.5 illustrates the methods of transport to

Figure 3.5: Method of travel to educational institutions – Tasmania

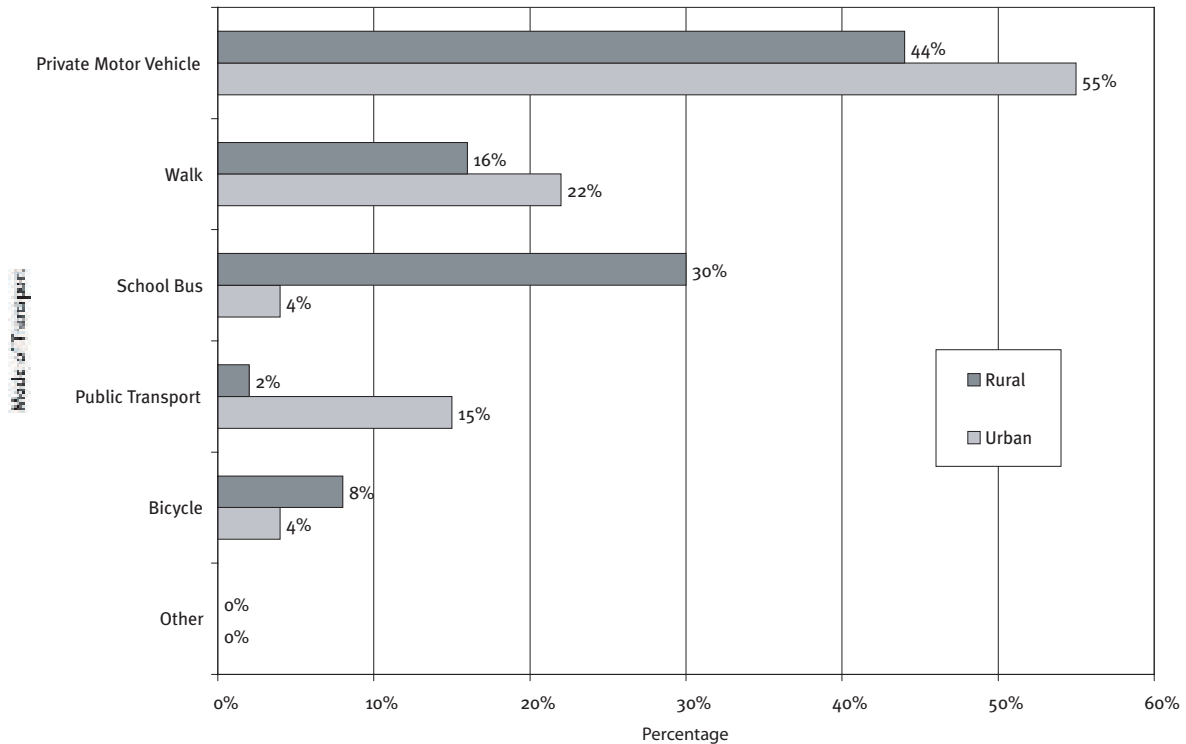


Note: Components do not add to 100% as a person could have used more than one method of transport.

Source: ABS 9201.6 Transport Patterns and Preferences Tasmania October 1997; BAH Analysis.

Victoria – transport to educational institutions

Figure 3.6 illustrates the methods of transport to education facilities in both rural and urban areas of Victoria (ABS 1997).

Figure 3.6: Method of travel to educational institutions – Victoria

Source: ABS 9201.2 Transport Patterns and Preferences Victoria October 1994.

This indicates:

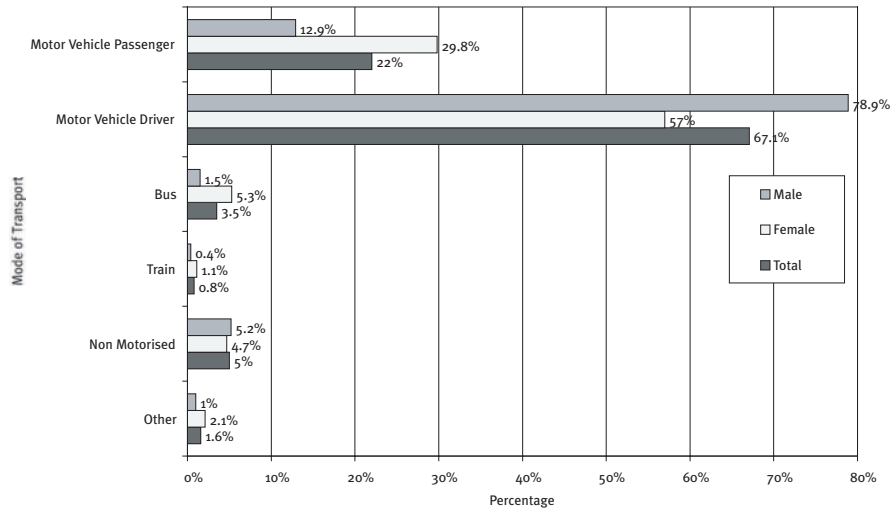
- Victoria has a slightly different picture to that in Tasmania;
- the private car and walking are far more significant urban access modes in Victoria than Tasmania;
- walk is less significant for access to education in rural Victoria than in rural Tasmania;
- using public transport to get to education is similar in both rural settings although in Tasmania this is defined more as “bus”, in Victoria as a “school bus”. Such differences may not be significant since many travellers find the distinction between a school bus and a scheduled route bus difficult to differentiate; and
- overall the main difference between access to education in rural Victoria to that in Tasmania is that walk is more significant in Tasmania.

NSW – transport to shopping, social, recreational, medical etc. trips

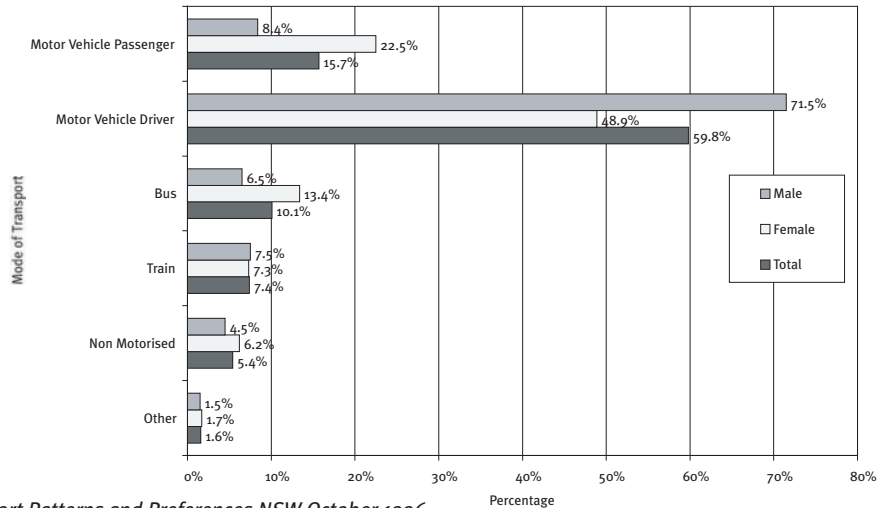
The NSW version of the ABS Transport Patterns and Preferences Survey (ABS 1996) included questions regarding access modes used for travel to destinations for other than education or work purposes. This was provided for both Metropolitan (Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong) as well as the Rest of NSW (or rural and regional NSW). It was also available by sex. Figure 3.7 (page 36) shows the results from this analysis.

Figure 3.7: Method of travel to other trip purposes (excluding work and education) – NSW

Rural and Regional



Metropolitan



Source: ABS 9201.1 Transport Patterns and Preferences NSW October 1996.

Other Trips include shopping, recreation, social, medical etc. trips.

This indicates that:

- much like work travel, rural transport for “other” purposes tends to have higher usage of car driver and in particular car passenger travel than urban transport. What is significant is that travel for “other” purposes in rural and regional areas displays significantly higher car and car passenger travel compared to work (Figure 3.4 on page 34); and
- there are some interesting observations possible regarding the differences between male and female travel patterns for “other” travel in rural and regional areas:
 - car driving is generally a male dominated

activity. Some 79 per cent of males drive whilst only 57 per cent of females drive;

- getting a lift is a very female dominated activity. Almost a third of travel by females is by getting a lift. Women are almost three times more likely to be getting a lift than males. While women comprise 42 per cent of those driving they comprise 70 per cent of those getting a lift; and
- public transport use also appears to be a female domain in rural areas. Usage of bus and trains is significantly higher for women in the survey. Based on this data 77 per cent of public transport users would be female⁶.

⁶ This finding is uncertain because the samples for definition of rail and bus usage in males were considered to be below reasonable significance by ABS. In addition the survey covered persons aged only above 18 years of age.

4

Best practice case studies

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter describes five best practice Australian transport projects targeting the needs of young people in rural and regional areas. This includes an assessment of key success factors in transport project development.

4.2 Approach

Case study projects were identified through:

- suggestions from the NYARS consultative group associated with this project; and
- discussions with officers of government transport authorities throughout Australia.

In general, good examples of transport projects for young people in rural and regional Australia were hard to find. The only criteria used to identify a case study project was that it should have a proven success record and have been operating for some time so that success has been demonstrated.

Case study projects were investigated via interviews with key staff involved in their management or development. Their cooperation in the assembly of the material for this report is gratefully acknowledged.

4.3 Runaway Bus – (WA)

4.3.1 Description

The “Runaway Bus” aims to provide affordable, regular inter-regional transport to places that young

people want to travel to during the summer school holidays. Its focus is to entice young people into a healthy and safe activity and to relieve boredom for regional youth. It is also aimed at providing some equality of service and activities between young people living in rural and regional areas with those who reside in the city. It is also seen as a means of minimising the cost of living for those within regional areas and also to provide parents with relief from both the costs and burden of providing activities for their children during the summer months. As a social activity focused around transport, it is also seen as a means of encouraging friendships outside of the boundaries of the confines of the local environment.

The service is an inter-regional bus service operating from rural and regional areas of South West Western Australia to:

- Yallingup Beach, a popular surfing beach; and
- Smiths Beach, a popular family beach.

A key feature of the service is that it leverages existing transport networks in the South West Region to maximise access to the service.

The service was initiated in 1989 following a survey at Busselton Senior High School by the Department of Health. A major concern at the time was the growing drug use of young people and the survey asked young people “what do you need to relieve boredom during the school holidays?”. The clear answer was a bus connection to surfing beaches along the coast.

Following on from this South West Coachlines, the regions principal coach service provider, started a service between Busselton to the beaches. Over its first six weeks it carried around 500 people. Authorities in Bunbury recognised the value of the service and asked for its extension to the Bunbury area. As part of this extension the service was integrated into the regions inter-regional bus network to ensure connections were maximised with available services.

The service has now been operating for 15 years.

The service is organised and operated by South West Coach Lines. Funding is provided by a range of organisations including:

- South West Coachlines (who operate two connecting coach legs into Bunbury for free);
- local business, mostly large mining companies who are seeking opportunities to support the wider community e.g. Alcoa;
- shires (City of Bunbury);
- the South West Development Commission; and
- passengers (through fares).

The major source of funding is sponsors, particularly the larger companies. The operator includes sponsor advertising on vehicles and in-service schedules as part of sponsorship deals.

In addition the service has included joint sponsorship from government organisations wanting

to communicate with young people. For example it has been used as a focal point for the “Drug Safe” and “Slip Slop Slap” campaigns.

4.3.2 Operations, resources, markets, value to young people

The main “Runaway Bus” operates from Bunbury to Smiths Beach, a distance of about 100 km. On the way it calls at several important coastal settlements including Busselton.

However in practice the service is planned and operated as an integrated part of the regional bus network. Hence it is possible to get onto the “Runaway Bus” from the scheduled inter-regional coaches operating from a much wider range of settlements. For example the service coordinates with country bus services from Augusta to Busselton. In addition the service runs from the coach station at Bunbury and Busselton where it meets local route bus services.

In addition, South West Coachlines operate a free bus service from Collie (53 km), and another from Manjimup (69 km) to Bunbury.

This regional network is also supplemented by shared community cars from wider settlements. It is common to see young people dropped off in groups by parents.

Figure 4.1: The “Runaway Bus”



All photographs provided courtesy of Stephen Blakeney

The service operates for six days a week over the Christmas school holiday periods (six weeks). It leaves Bunbury 8.30 a.m. and arrives at the beaches between 9.45 and 10.00 a.m. It returns from Smiths Beach at 2.00 p.m. and arrives back at Bunbury for 3.30 p.m.

The service has a fare of \$5 per person per day (or \$2.50 each way). This is a remarkably cheap price for a journey which can involve over 300 km (both ways).

A fleet of around three coaches is required for the “Runway Bus” leg. Often these are run together since the peak demand can fill three coaches (about 115 people). Coaches are considered an essential element of the service since many young people bring surfboards and these can be stored in the coach baggage lockers. Storing the number of surfboards involved would not be possible in a standard route bus.

In addition around three coaches are used for the free feeder services from Collie and Manjimup.

Figure 4.2: “Runaway Bus” timetable

30 DAYS of extreme summer

Runaway Bus

Runs Monday to Saturday from Monday December 29 2003 to Saturday January 31 2004

COLLIE (MON-FRI)			BUNBURY/CAPE/DUSSELTON (MON-SAT)			MANJIMUP (MON-FRI)		
Time	From	To	Time	From	To	Time	From	To
08:30	Collie	Bunbury	08:30	Bunbury	Manjimup	08:30	Manjimup	Bunbury
09:00	Collie	Bunbury	09:00	Bunbury	Manjimup	09:00	Manjimup	Bunbury
09:30	Collie	Bunbury	09:30	Bunbury	Manjimup	09:30	Manjimup	Bunbury
10:00	Collie	Bunbury	10:00	Bunbury	Manjimup	10:00	Manjimup	Bunbury
10:30	Collie	Bunbury	10:30	Bunbury	Manjimup	10:30	Manjimup	Bunbury
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Some 2 751 passengers used the service during 2001–02 or around 80 a day. They had a peak day of around 115. It is estimated that over 30 000 trips have been made on the service in its 15 years of operation.

While the service targets young people some young families have been known to use the service.

The service is believed to have had an impact on tourism in the region because young families are attracted to stay in the area because they know their children can get to the beach easily and safely.

The key value of the project to young people is that it has relieved boredom during the summer months. Encouraging healthy activities and also wider social interaction and contacts is seen as another major benefit of the project. Sponsoring authorities also see the project as diverting young people from harmful activities such as drug-taking or even suicide.

4.3.3 Key success factors

Key success factors for the project were seen as:

- the willingness of the bus operator to actively seek sponsorship support for the project;
- the fact that a single bus operator ran all of the regions services made it much easier to leverage the network and promote the operation;
- major companies willing to support a good community project was an important factor. The ability of the operator to leverage and maintain this support was essential;
- the willingness of local and municipal government to support the project was essential; and
- TV/newspaper and printer marketing was important for support – all the country regional papers and the regional TV channel donate at least part of advertising to the service and see it as a major community project worthy of support.

4.3.4 Wider rollout issues

Consideration was given to whether a project of this type might be implemented elsewhere. A number of wider rollout issues were identified in relation to this idea:

- need for a major trip attractor plus a gap in the transport to this attractor;
- the network coordination aspects of the project will require an available service network with feasible timings;
- having a single operator for the region made it easier to put the project together. The more people involved in the project the harder it gets

to implement and run. In effect the risks are greater; and

- good sustainable, reliable and long-term sponsors were a major reason the project has remained in operation. A support network of other potential sponsors has ensured sustainable operations.

4.4 Taxi voucher project – Tasmania

4.4.1 Description

This project aims to address the lack of safe transport options for young people after dark. In particular it was to provide young people with a safer option than walking home at night when they have no money left. The scheme encourages young people to pay for their taxi fares using pre-paid taxi vouchers. These are made available through retailers and also from a range of other organisations. Taxi drivers accept them as cash and will remit any change for the \$5 or \$10 vouchers.

The scheme was initiated in October 2001 by the Tasmanian Youth Consultative Committee (TYCC), a group of 15 young people from around Tasmania whose aim is to consult, inform and act on youth issues. The scheme targeted the safety concerns of young people getting home after a night out. TYCC developed the initiative in conjunction with Launceston City Council, Anglicare and Mission Employment.

In 2002 the scheme was selected as a Community Development Award winner at the Tasmanian Local Government Association Awards for Excellence.

Initially the scheme was managed by TYCC and Mission Employment, then it was transferred to Launceston City Council. At its inception a small grant (\$1500) was required to develop unique vouchers which could not be forged and which the taxi industry and the scheme manager considered suitable as an alternative to money. There were also small additional set-up costs for a computer and also the systems for monitoring the distribution and location of vouchers. Each voucher has a unique number so that all pre-paid ticket stocks can be monitored. Systems are also needed to handle the money collected from retailers and to pay the taxi companies.

Apart from these set-up costs there are no substantial additional scheme costs since the scheme pays for itself. Launceston City Council has two youth development workers who manage the scheme but they probably only spend an hour or two a week on it. They have a volunteer who spends two days a

week liaising with retailers in collecting the money, distributing new vouchers and banking.

There are no costs associated with retailers or other organisations selling the vouchers. They have not asked for a commission and see the scheme as a way of helping young people.

The local taxi companies were an important part of setting up the scheme. They have been most cooperative with the idea.

The scheme has been so popular that resources are currently being sought so it can go State-wide. The scheme is to be transferred back to TYCC and

it is to be managed by their associate, the Youth Network of Tasmania.

4.4.2 Operations, resources, markets, value to young people


Pre-purchased taxi fares are made available in \$5 and \$10 vouchers. They can be purchased in over 35 business, organisations and retail outlets in the Launceston CBD and suburbs.

Figure 4.3 shows a promotional notice of the scheme found on the Tasmanian University Student web site.

Figure 4.3: Taxi voucher scheme: Promotional notice

TYCC Taxi Vouchers

GRAB A CAB



TYCC Taxi vouchers are now available for sale from the Contact Centre.

This is the perfect way to get home!

The vouchers are a not-for-profit item and are available in \$10 values to all students and non-students.

The vouchers can be redeemed in **City Cabs** and **Taxi Combined**, the numbers of these companies are on the back of the voucher.

And you get change!

Taxi drivers will give change if the fare is less than \$10, or you could be really extravagant and leave it as a tip.

So now when you're buying a concert ticket from the contact centre, grab a cab voucher at the same time, then all you have to worry about is who is going to buy you a drink.

Source: Tasmania University Union web site.

The largest task in managing the scheme was setting it up. This entailed identifying quality vouchers and setting up the financial management systems and getting the distributors involved. Support was forthcoming from all sides including the taxi companies. The day-to-day management

involves checking up on distributors to see if any cash is available to transfer to the scheme and also to see if they need any more vouchers.

There was one minor glitch. Some complaints came from customers who could not get any change

from the taxi driver. The taxi company got the drivers in and this problem was solved straight away.

In the schemes' first year broadly \$4 500 worth of vouchers were sold which equates to between 600 and 700 safe rides.

Many vouchers were being purchased by parents to give to their children as a form of safety measure should they need to get home and had no money. At Christmas they had one adult buying \$200 worth to give away to young relatives as a present.

They have also had a few older people buying vouchers because they can also have problems in managing money and the vouchers give them some assurance of a ride home.

The key value to young people is that it gives them a safe ride home at night. However, this is only a valid benefit when combined with the money management problems young people can have when going out at night and weekend. The scheme lets them get home because they can pre-plan the trip so that if they get drunk they can still get home.

4.4.3 Key success factors

These are:

- low cost;
- simple idea;
- easy to set up and manage;
- came from young people themselves and hence was well supported by young people; and
- addresses an important issue.

4.4.4 Wider rollout issues

Many of the start-up problems of the scheme have been solved by Launceston City Council who have developed a manual of how to manage the scheme. Since there are few financial commitments, all that is required is the commitment from an organisation to manage it. In a large metropolitan area this scheme could entail more substantial management resources. This issue would not be so significant in a rural and regional setting. Cooperation from the taxi industry is clearly essential. It is important to ensure the scheme is managed by an organisation which the industry feels is reliable and will pay them on time.

It is difficult to find any real barriers to wider rollout of this scheme.

4.5 Murrindindi Cyberbus (Vic)

4.5.1 Description

The Murrindindi Cyberbus aims to provide quality IT telecommunications resources into remote and rural towns within the shire of Murrindindi located in North Central Victoria. The Cyberbus is a 38 ft converted bus fitted with computers and a bi-directional satellite (on a trailer) which enables mobile Internet access.

The Cyberbus provides free Internet access and is available for booking at special events and for community activities. It also provides a focus for a range of community activity via:

- the provision of online and written information and outreach workers from a number of agencies who travel around on the vehicle. This includes:
 - Centrelink;
 - Community Health;
 - Drug and Alcohol; and
 - other welfare agencies e.g. the Safer House program for securing rural properties offered in association with the Victorian police;
- acting as a venue for the meeting of small groups (up to 12 in comfort) notably youth or community groups; and
- the provision of a pool of people across the shire who assist in training and service delivery.

The service started initially as a mobile youth service vehicle after the local community health services donated a mobile health van to council in 2000. It was operated as a mobile youth services vehicle for about a year.

During this period the Shire of Murrindindi, in association with the City of Whittlesea and a not-for-profit group, applied to the Australian Government for assistance under the "Networking the Nation" program. This was to enable Internet access to the vehicle.

Internet access was possible via a telephone link. However it was very slow and unreliable mainly due to the hilly relief in the Murrindindi area. The "Networking the Nation" program in association with Telstra developed and deployed a bi-directional satellite link using a trailer towed by the bus. It is the only system of this kind in Australia which is not run directly by Telstra.

Figure 4.4: The Murrundindi Cyberbus



The development of the technology took some time. Four separate versions of the satellite trailer were trialled as part of the project over about 2–3 years. Telstra saw the project as a research and development initiative and eventually donated the trailer to the group.

Ongoing funding was always a major issue for the group. Centrelink got on board by paying Cyberbus as an agent. This covers only a small proportion of costs however, and the program is still struggling for a sustainable financial base.

The development of the technology was funded by Telstra as part of the Australian Government “Networking the Nation” program. This was only for new technology development and implementation. That part of the program finished about a year ago.

Murrundindi Shire Council operates the program. The driver/operator is paid for by them and is also

part paid for by the Centrelink agency agreement. Council also fund the vehicle’s operating costs and also the managers and youth workers who are part of the program.

4.5.2 Operations, resources, markets, value to young people

The program includes:

- Youth Services Outreach to Schools. The aim is to inform young people about how to access youth services themselves i.e. to promote “help seeking” behaviour. Each primary school is visited once per term. The goal is to access every Grade 6 child in the shire within six years;
- Centrelink agency. Provides access to forms and also the Internet for job search activities

which are a mandatory requirement of unemployment benefit recipients. This includes sighting personal identification to verify access to benefits;

- community access to the Internet. A free service used for a number of work, recreational and even banking services; and
- youth meetings at high schools. The bus stops at the shires' two high schools once a fortnight. Young people from a range of areas get together. One major activity is they organise their "FReeZA" dance parties. These are dance parties supported by the State Government and run in a drug and alcohol free environment.

A typical week for Cyberbus includes:

- Monday:
 - Administration/maintaining the vehicle/systems.
- Tuesday:
 - 8.00 a.m. start, 5.30 p.m. evening return to depot at Alexandra.
 - Eastern half of shire.
 - Marysville, Buxton, Taggerdy, Thornton, Eildon, Alexandra.
 - Major stops (1–1.5 hours) at Marysville and Alexandra. Vehicle sets uplink for Internet access.
 - Others are whistlestops where the vehicle pulls over for people to access Centrelink services/get information. This is often prearranged via the driver who can be accessed via a mobile phone (when in mobile phone areas).
- Wednesday:
 - Kinglake central and west, Flowerdale and Yea.
- Thursday:
 - More youth orientated day.
 - Stops at four primary schools to see Grade 6 (aged 11–12) young people. This is where the promotion of help-seeking is taught. A range of youth workers attend the bus (on a rota) including family councillors, health workers any other outreach agencies. Each school is visited once per term.
 - Every second Thursday lunchtime Yea/Alexandra secondary schools are visited as a referral point and also for meetings of young people. This is where the "FReeZA" dance parties are organised.

- Friday:
 - Administration and also where non-Cyberbus work is done by the driver e.g. the "encouraging online communities" program.

The main resources are:

- the vehicle – a 23-year-old route bus and trailer;
- the single driver/operator;
- computers (four desktops). They used to have six notebooks kept on board but these have been moved for security reasons. All computers are old council machines which are out of date;
- computer satellite link on the trailer;
- council depot garage; and
- support staff at council.

Facilities on board include:

- a little lounge area;
- two tables;
- seating (12 people can get on board); and
- tea and coffee making machines.

It took several years to get the technology to work well. It now takes 10–15 minutes from stopping the vehicle to getting the computers to work on the Internet. Earlier versions of the technology were hard to work with but these problems have been ironed out thanks to Telstra.

The vehicle is very old and leaks when it rains. It also breaks down. All operations avoid off road conditions and no planned operations in snow conditions are permitted.

Some 500 km per week are operated. The bus operates all year around.

A major issue facing the operation is the age of the vehicle which is in poor condition. Also a single bus driver/operator runs the vehicle. There is no backup for leave/sickness. The service stopped when he was recently on leave to get married.

Around 150 clients per week use the bus suggesting about 26 000 visits annually. Murrindindi has 13 000 residents although the schools have many students who live "out of shire".

Young people use the primary and secondary college visitation services. Also some use the Internet access but this is mainly used by older adults using Centrelink.

A major success of the program has been the significant increase in the volume of self-referrals

to attend youth services. This has been particularly high in relation to the drug and alcohol services area. Other benefits are:

- it removes the need for very difficult travel to access services. Thus it enables greater participation in activities;
- can act as a focus point for community activity to bring together people from lots of areas. It has been particularly successful at bringing people together who live some distance from each other;
- providing access to information;
- a cost-effective way of providing access to youth services compared to the need to hire many youth workers in many locations; and
- a very equitable means of providing youth support services.

4.5.3 Key success factors

These are:

- key personnel – the driver/operator needs to be a very special person who can drive a bus, be computer literate and understand and operate the hardware and software, assist in vehicle maintenance, be an organiser i.e. a person who arrange itineraries and also an effective communicator i.e. to deal with young and older people;
- technology – the technology must provide services quickly and cost-effectively;
- visibility – the bus needs to stand out so that everyone gets to know about it; and
- shire council support – it is essential to maintain financial and operations support.

4.5.4 Wider rollout issues

- Telstra assistance is essential in finding the right technology. The Murrindindi technology is unique to their circumstances (hilly terrain). Areas with flatter topography might find micro-wave communications technology more appropriate;
- need a decent vehicle. A second-hand bus is not the answer. There is a view that a bus is not the appropriate vehicle. A custom modified truck or mobile library would also work well. The bus can, however, be symbolic as a means to increase the profile of the vehicle;
- commitment to ongoing funding – it takes a lot of time and energy to keep programs going particularly when finding funds is required; and

- getting good committed people to run it. Staff need to have a unique set of skills.

4.5.5 Other

Murrindindi is facing a funding problem for next year. Council have been supporting the system but is continuously looking for alternatives due to the level of commitment required.

The vehicle is old and needs to be replaced next year. They have applied to Australian Government and local agencies for support. Moria Shire, a nearby Victorian shire, also has a bus with Internet access. This uses a CapSat satellite which is a better quality (quicker to start) system but is expensive (\$7 a minute). Due to the high cost, Moria Shire (Vic) do not offer open free Internet access. However they will download items on request.

4.6 Wimmera VET Bus (Vic)

4.6.1 Description

The Wimmera VET Bus is a bus service for young people to access vocational education and training (VET) programs. Operated in the Wimmera and Southern Mallee districts of Victoria the service provides access during the day for people who would otherwise have to rely on parents for very long and time consuming lifts or who would have no option to gain access to VET services.

The main aim of the project was to increase the availability of VET services to young people living in rural and regional areas. The scheme also assisted in increasing class enrolments and has acted to reduce the time and cost commitments of parents who had to spend several hours travel time in cars to provide lifts. Some students travel 260 kms to get the VET courses. The scheme was also aimed at increasing school retention rates.

A lack of regular, reliable and affordable transport in remote rural areas was the number one concern raised by young people in the Wimmera region. In 2001 a number of youth service providers examined ways to enhance VET course access. There were concerns that access to VET courses was too limiting for participation. Courses were held in Horsham and the only access was via parent lifts. This often took up a full day of parent's time. It was clear that many students were not able to access VET courses because parents did not have the time to provide lifts.

In 2002 a range of agencies developed the VET bus concept and started operations. Initially a

pilot program was run. It is still going in 2004. In setting up the program coordination with schools was needed to reorganise course timing so that the courses would fit the bus schedule.

The VET Bus Service was originally jointly funded by:

- school focused youth service (\$10K);
- parents (\$10K) – \$100 per term for VET bus ticket;
- local learning and employment network;
- regional youth committee;
- Department of Education and Training; and
- schools and shires.

The service is contracted to a local bus operator. The cost was about \$25K p.a. for two routes. This has increased to around \$35K with the addition of another route this year.

Today the program is mainly operated by:

- Workco – a youth employment agency and job network training company; and
- Yarriambiack Shire Council – who coordinate the service.

Finding funding is still considered a struggle. A lot of lobbying still goes on and each year there is the risk that funding cannot be found.

Funding is now limited to parents (fees have increased) and the local learning and employment network. There are also “in-kind” contributions from Workco, Yarriambiack shire and schools.

4.6.2 Operations, resources, markets, value to young people

Services operate every Wednesday during term. The two initial routes operated were:

1. Nhill, Jeparit, Dimboola to Horsham and Longerenong. The service can be accessed by car from Rainbow and Kaniva; and
2. Hopetoun through Beulah, Warracknabeal to Horsham and Longerenong. Access from Donald and Birchip is also possible using feeder car access.

Figure 4.5 (page 47) shows the structure of these routes. The new route is from Edenhope and covers a new catchment for the service. It also provides pickup points from settlements which do not lie on the route.

The major resource commitments are the transport coordinator and the costs of the bus contract.

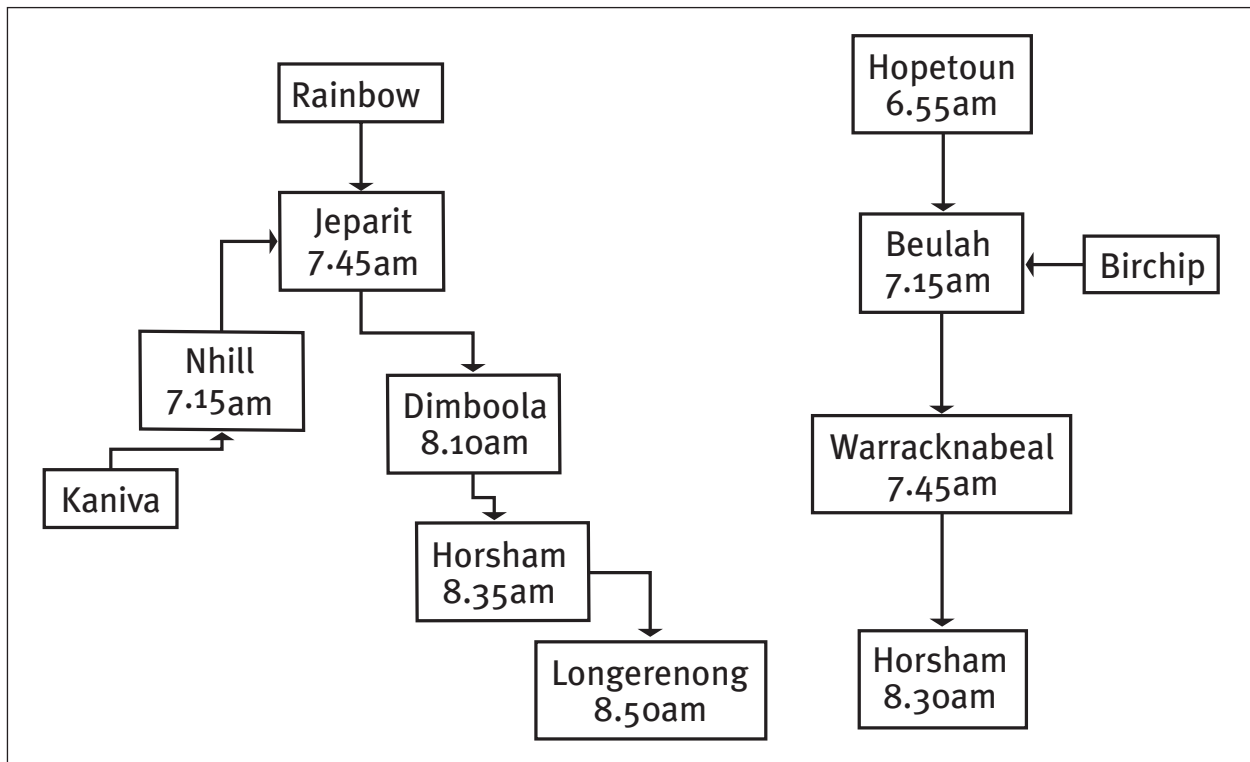
Due to the long-distances involved, some students can spend many hours on the bus each day.

Initially around 120 students used the services i.e. 240 boardings each day. This has increased to about 180. Students are aged between 15–17 years old.

A review of the scheme established the following outcomes:

- students using the scheme reported:
 - increased social contact making new friends;
 - new experiences and independence from parents;
 - an increased likelihood of remaining at school; and
 - a stronger connection to the community;
- improved access to training was seen as a major outcome of the project. A survey established that some 80 per cent of students who currently use the bus would not be able to access training without it;
- improved work prospects – employment outcomes were improved with evidence suggesting that local placement rather than jobs in regional centres were occurring; and
- participation and retention rates in education were increased considerably. This has acted to improve the viability of the course offerings in the schools in the Horsham cluster. This in turn has improved education offerings to a wider range of students (including those living “in town”).

Figure 4.5: VET Bus route structure – first two routes



4.6.3 Key success factors

- cooperative approaches between the diverse range of agencies involved. Schools for example have realigned course programming with the times of the bus;
- cooperative approaches in agencies providing funding; and
- a ground up model – arose from key individuals in the community who saw the need and then acted.

In addition the geography of the region acted to make the service feasible. Also the clustering of schools and VET offerings in Horsham made it possible to run buses to cater for this need.

4.6.4 Wider rollout issues

- engage the local players (students, teachers, schools);
- geographic routes/distances and feasibility of timing – this will not be the best answer for providing training in all locations. Having education clusters is a key to this i.e. having the critical mass of activities and feasibility of getting there;
- involve registered training organisations around the logistics of timetabling classes and buses. All sides need some flexibility;
- communicate training outcomes of the scheme; and
- funding/lobbying – most successful regionally rather than on a State or national basis.

Figure 4.6: The Wimmera VET Bus

4.7 Youth on Wheels Inc/YAXI/Bat Bus (NSW)

4.7.1 Description

A number of transport projects in northern NSW operate on a similar principle but with different names⁷. These include the “YOWI” or “Youth on Wheels Inc” project, the “YAXI” or “Youth Taxi” and the “Bat Bus” or “Byron Area Travel Bus”. The “YOWI” project, which covers the Lismore area, is the main focus of this discussion.

“YOWI” provides discounted transport for young people to social, sporting and recreational activities. Its objective is to provide cheap transport for young people and to improve the range of activities available for young people to participate in.

“YOWI” is a project managed by a part-time coordinator who receives telephone calls from young people wanting to organise transport to undertake an activity. Usually calls go onto an answering machine and are followed up later. The coordinator considers the range of transport options available and matches the transport to the need. “YOWI” pays at least 20 per cent of the fares. Young people, or their parents pay the rest (usually directly to the operators or providers of the service).

The project started 10–11 years ago. At the time a transport program for after school travel from Byron to Mullumbimbi was proposed. Byron Youth Services applied through the State government area assistance funding program. The application was based on the

lack of public transport in the evenings and weekends. The funding application was successful and provided for five years. Part of the reason for the success with the funding application was the high death rate in motor vehicle accidents for young people. The area had three times the State average of young people killed in motor vehicle accidents. This was because the area lacked any public transport at times when young people could use it, the majority of the youth population lived out of town and needed transport to do anything. Also the local roads are of a relatively poor quality. There are also very high volumes of long-distance through trucks/traffic on the Pacific Highway. Many young people need to get licences at a very young age and have to drive in these difficult conditions.

The concept was to provide subsidised transport to young people aged 12–25 living in the local government area to attend social recreational activities. This involves the following process:

- young people ring a part-time coordinator – say how many are going and timing;
- the coordinator seeks a vehicle to do this. They have a database of contracts to do this;
- find something appropriate and then give them a 20 per cent discount. Young people must pay remainder; and
- often parents can drive, sometimes “YOWI” can provide drivers. In general they do not permit young people to drive vehicles which they provide. Some groups use a registered volunteer driver (in this case the expenses of

⁷ Note: This description is sourced from discussions with the coordinator of Youth on Wheels Inc.

the driver are covered but no wage is paid. A registered driver goes through a full security check).

The Byron Bay “Bat Bus” was the first of the projects to start up. “YOWI” followed three years later when Northern Rivers Community Transport applied and got funding for the Lismore area. Some six years later an application for expansion of the scheme to cover the Austonville Plateau area was successful. Some six years ago Lismore handed this to Ballina Youth Services and Ballina Community Transport.

There is a plan currently under development to expand the concept to the Casino Kyogle area.

“YOWI” is sponsored by Northern Rivers Community Transport based in Lismore and is funded via the State Government Department of Transport. About \$20k p.a. in funding support is provided which covers the cost of the coordinator and subsidy for transport. Subsidy is the largest proportion of costs. The coordinator works from home and the costs of the phone is supported by the Community Transport group. Ongoing costs are kept to a minimum.

The transport subsidy is at least 20 per cent but can be higher if a good argument is given. They have actually paid 100 per cent on occasion e.g. some school children wanted to go to the blood bank to give blood.

4.7.2 Operations, resources, markets, value to young people

The key resources of the project are:

- a telephone line and answering machine;
- a good coordinator with experience; and
- knowledge of available transport.

They mostly use private bus operators and also a minibus self-drive hire operator. They tend to offer jobs to the local bus operator first. Occasionally they need to use wheelchair accessible vehicles run by the Community Transport Group. “YOWI” owns no transport of its own.

The number of calls can vary and are often seasonal. In general they get two calls a week; the most in one night was eight. They get a lot of enquiries which don’t transform into trips.

The scheme has encouraged private operators to explore trialling scheduled route services which perform selected tasks. One operator runs a scheme during the holidays to run buses to the Brisbane theme parks. This now runs commercially with some help from subsidies.

They don’t deal with cash directly – young

people pay the operator. Dealing with cash needs resources and they avoid this. A key theme of project management is reducing the amount of resources used to get the job done.

Last year they had 2 000 passengers. In 1998 they were running at about 700 p.a. so they have grown by about 186 per cent in five years.

The number-one trip destination is Dreamworld on the Gold Coast. Also the “State of Origin” game in Brisbane is popular. Sporting competitions that involve direct participation, as well as being a spectator, are also popular. Sometimes they cater for birthday parties including sleepovers. Camping in the bush is another popular event. Church youth groups make regular bookings e.g. once per month to go away to days at the beach. Some come in from Nimbin to go go-carting.

There is not a lot of recurrent travel. Most is one-off. Most recurrent travel is sports related between April and August (seven times a year for away games). December to May is the quietest time after the school holidays.

The majority of users are in the 14 to 18 age group and all events are strictly drug and alcohol free.

It is estimated that they run around two buses a week. Their biggest trip was 150 young people to Sydney (four buses) for a Rock Eisteddfod.

The key values of the project to young people are:

- greater range of activity participation for young people at a price they can afford; and
- safe participation in activities for young people.

Although the project provides lower cost transport, a major benefit of the scheme is thought to be its ability to provide a one-stop link between young people and transport providers. Young people are not good at understanding how transport works and transport providers are not good at communicating with young people. The project provides a communication link between each group.

In addition the project has encouraged transport operators to “trial new service ideas”. This has resulted in successful commercial services.

4.7.3 Key success factors

These are:

- consistency, experience and longevity in the coordinator and the transport providers;
- cooperation of transport and other community groups;

- good communications/promotion of the scheme;
- young people have to own the project. As part of setting up the project, young people have to give the project a name. This is why there are three names for the projects in NSW. You need “bottom up” ownership of the scheme not “top down”. You get this by experience/good consultation and treating people with self-respect;
- a consistent funding base. The consistent funding provided by NSW DoT is a major reason for the success of the scheme. The ability to offer some subsidy makes people try and use the scheme. They doubt the scheme would work without the subsidy;
- need a paid coordinator. Volunteers will not be feasible as there is a danger that a volunteer coordinator would leave the scheme; and
- simplify and streamline administration e.g. no cash, use of a telephone answering machine.

4.7.4 Wider rollout issues

A potential plan for a new scheme was identified:

1. Start with a “buy in” program to develop the concept:
 - talk to the local youth workers/bus operators/key players/get “buy in” i.e. they participate to get it going. Don’t walk in with the idea and get them to conform; and
 - identify parents/young people with the highest profile, those organising social activities for scouts, church groups, school etc. and go and talk to them.
2. Go for funding:
 - keep pushing to find potential funders and argue the case. Would bus companies be prepared to pay the money?
3. Set Up:
 - promotion – go back to the consultation group – look for key people/groups e.g. sporting groups to start doing business;
 - keep good records as a basis to understand how transport providers perform and to be able to demonstrate the value of the project;
 - leverage experienced local groups e.g. NSW Community Transport groups for issues like insurance. This may need to be sorted out for other States/Territories; and
 - continue putting the word out. The scheme

sells itself. You don’t need to do too much advertising. Some newspapers provide free advertising as a community activity.

4.8 Appraisal of key success factors

This section comments on some of the key themes identified in this review of “best practice” projects. The aim is to identify key success factors which may be useful in developing future transport projects for young people.

4.8.1 Local youth and community involvement

Every scheme identified had its inception via local community workers identifying a need, developing a transport service which meets these needs and then actively seeking funding to get the service running. In many cases young people developed the concept themselves. In every case the involvement of young people and a wider community of stakeholders via the development of “buy-in” with these groups was an essential ingredient of success.

4.8.2 Sustainable funding

Every scheme seeks sustainable funding. A rare and unique feature of the Tasmanian Taxi Voucher Scheme is that, apart from initial set up requirements, it has very little funding needs.

Active State and local government involvement in providing sustainable funding was a critical success factor in the Wimmera VET bus and “YOWI” project. The NSW community transport program is the most significant transport assistance program in Australia. As a result NSW has significantly more transport schemes relating to young people in rural and regional areas than any other part of Australia.

At the same time local authority involvement is a consistent theme in every project mentioned.

The WA Runaway Bus is the only service that relies substantially on commercial sponsorship. It is this opinion of the consultant that the operator of this scheme is particularly gifted in promoting sponsorship funding. Skills of this kind are rare to find as are large commercial organisations who are willing to support schemes of this nature.

The large amount of work involved in seeking sustainable funding and the uncertainties surrounding funding were a major theme of discussions with all participants.

4.8.3 The organiser – a valuable resource

Every scheme revolved around an organiser. This person was a good communicator who could talk to young people, talk to stakeholders and funding authorities and who could understand and learn about transport. In the case of the Murrindindi Cyberbus, the bus driver also needed to understand computers, the Internet and setting up advanced digital communications.

It is significant that we can contrast the unique and valuable nature of these people with the modest salaries they are paid. A major theme of discussions with people involved in these schemes was the extremely high turnover rate of staff in the youth sector.

We must conclude that retaining skilled organisers is a significant weakness in developing transport services for young people in rural and regional Australia. The lack of consistent experience and intellectual capital is a major problem in this sector.

4.8.4 The communication barrier

Another significant theme is the communication barrier between young people and transport providers regarding matching transport operations with transport needs. The range and type of transport services provided and how to use them is not a subject which is well understood by many young people. Indeed it is rare to find a single agent who understands all the services which are available.

At the same time local transport operators, usually bus companies and their staff, do not communicate

well with young people. This is partly a generation problem but also results from negative experiences. School bus services are a major bus industry activity in rural and regional areas and many operators have negative perceptions of young people through the difficult behaviour of some young people on these buses.

Finding the means to overcome these barriers will be an important step in improving the availability of transport to young people in rural and regional areas.

4.8.5 Utilising existing transport services

Another theme was the use of existing transport services and operators to provide transport. With the possible exception of the Cyberbus project, all the other projects involved the contracting or the participation of existing operators and services. In each case this left the operator with the technical task of maintaining, and operating, vehicles and staff. The schemes entailed adding value to existing transport services to cater for the specific needs of young people.

4.8.6 A high profile, visibility and promotion

Each scheme involved promotion of the transport concept to some extent. Advertising, a vehicle with distinctive vehicle liveries, or “catchy” scheme names were key themes in this area. Also “event based” promotion, particularly where young people gather for regional activities, was a common approach. Leveraging the goodwill of the media and printing companies was also a common thread which enabled low cost promotion.

5 Transport options and opportunities

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter identifies better performing transport options which target young people. This includes a review of transport options provided from research literature and ideas suggested by young people during study consultations. The findings of market testing of transport improvement ideas are also presented.

5.2 Transport improvement for young people

5.2.1 Overview

Ideas for improving rural transport services for

young people fall into eight main categories:

- conventional public transport services;
- community transport services;
- motor vehicle driver schemes;
- ride sharing schemes;
- cycling and walking;
- telematics;
- transport subsidies and grants; and
- bringing services to communities (Outreach).

Table 5.1 provides an overview of these categories. Further details are provided below.

Table 5.1: Overview of transport improvement options

Transport service	Description	Service examples
Conventional public transport services	Improvements and expansion of regular public transport services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• new bus services• higher service frequency• longer service spans• lower fares (including smart card ticketing ideas)• operation at weekends/nights• fund using school buses when not in use

Table 5.1 continued

Transport service	Description	Service examples
Community transport services	Services provided by a (not-for-profit) community transport group, or other community group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community bus services (group, many to one) demand responsive bus services community bus brokerage
Motor vehicle schemes	Schemes to assist with driver training and motor vehicle purchase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> car/moped grants/subsidy schemes improved training programs and licence testing
Ridesharing schemes	Schemes to enable people without motor vehicles to rideshare with drivers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community car schemes/volunteer driving safety car scheme hitchhiker licensing and designated pick-up points/driver, rider licensing police providing lifts modify the post bus to provide passenger access
Cycling and walking	Improvements to walking/cycling infrastructure and special arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Walking School Bus” safe cycle routes shared bike schemes integration of cycling with public transport
Telematics	Use of information and communication technologies to inform and facilitate travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet based booking system for demand responsive bus schemes and car schemes
Transport subsidies and grants	Subsidies or grants provided for a range of travel options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> subsidised taxi vouchers, driving lessons, public transport fares motorbike repair grants
Outreach	Bring more services to communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mobile libraries and banks use of Internet and telephone for access to facilities

Table 5.2 presents an analysis suggesting the suitability of the options identified for different types of community and location.

Table 5.2: Suitability of transport improvement options by community/location type

Transport improvement option	Type of community/location			
	Regional centres	Small towns, villages	Non-urban hinterlands	Isolated and remote communities
Conventional public transport services	✓✓ Long-distance and local services	✓ Mainly long-distance services	✓ Long-distance services only	✓ Occasional long-distance services only
Community transport services	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

Table 5.2 continued

Motor vehicle schemes	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Ridesharing schemes	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Cycling and walking	✓✓	✓	x	x
Telematics	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Transport subsidies and grants	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Outreach	✓	✓✓	✓	✓

Key: ✓✓ = Very suitable ✓ = Usually suitable x = Not suitable

Conventional public transport services are more suited to larger regional settlements and for long-distance services. Cycling and walking is also more suited to larger more self-contained regional centres. It is not suitable for access to activities in rural hinterlands and remote and isolated communities. Outreach is more suited to smaller rural urban centres. However, access to Outreach is still beneficial in other areas. All other options are advantageous in all rural and regional areas

although their design may be adjusted according to local circumstances.

5.2.2 Conventional public transport services

Where funding is available (generally public sector subsidy) conventional public transport services have been improved to address the needs of rural young people. Examples of the types of service improvement schemes are shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Examples of public transport service improvements

Improvement	Example	Reference
New bus service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dales to Darlington bus service, introduced in 2001, provides one return trip between two rural areas and Darlington College and town centre (arrives 8.50 a.m. and departs 5.00 p.m). The service is well used by 16–19-year-olds attending the college. Cumbria PlusBus – four trips per day in each direction on a route linking 12 villages with the market town of Kirkby Stephen and with the train station. 36 per cent of users 10–19 years (see Case Study 4.1). Wimmera VET Bus Service, Wimmera, Vic. Provides regular transport to VET courses for students (see Case study 4.2) 	<p>UK CTA Transport for Young People in Rural Areas</p> <p>Brown and Tyler 2002</p>
Longer service span	In Haydon Bridge (Northumberland) a 6.00 p.m. bus from the High School on Tuesdays instituted to coordinate with the school’s after-school program.	Ibid
Lower fares	In Northumberland extension of bus company’s “teen card” to rural routes giving under-18s a flat 50p fare after 6.00 p.m. weekdays and at weekends.	Ibid
Smartcard ticketing and fares	The “Life in the Bus Lane” scheme in North Devon uses Smartcards as passes for daily journeys to and from the two colleges. The Smartcards give half-price travel in the evenings, at weekends and during college holidays. The cards also entitle students to a range of retail discounts.	Ibid
Using school bus services	<p>In the UK examples exist of making use of contracted school bus services for transport of adults and young people.</p> <p>The Victorian Youth Bus Access Initiative, aims to provide access to young people engaged in accredited education and training access to spare seats on free school buses.</p>	<p>Scotland DOT, Rural; Community Transport.</p> <p>Khong (2003)</p>

Case Study 5.1. Cumbria PlusBus, UK

The service runs from Monday to Saturday between the hours of 6.30 a.m. and 7.00 p.m., and links the local villages together with the railway station. The PlusBus serves the local Co-op store no less than 24 times a day. The store has also provided a waiting area for customers catching the bus.

While the service is aimed at the community as a whole a large proportion, 40 per cent are young people. Many of these trips are inter-village which in the past would have been made in parents' cars. It has made a big difference to young people's independence. Overall the PlusBus has around 280–300 users per week.

Operators attribute the success of the PlusBus to strong community input, and peripheral activities (e.g. parcels) bring in extra money to help off-set costs. Funding has come from local government agencies and local parish councils.

5.2.3 Community transport services

Community transport is a broad term covering many forms of less formal public transport provision. It can range from a full sized bus service controlled by local people to taxi sharing schemes or semi-formalised lift giving. The key element in community transport is the inclusion of local people and communities in both the design and provision of the transport service. Historically community transport

has been somewhat ad hoc as it often depends on the willingness of local people to offer services. In addition, the services provided are generally not-for-profit.

The types of community transport services which are possible, and examples of these, are provided in Table 5.4. Table 3.2 (page 31) also shows some example schemes from Australia.

Table 5.4: Example community transport schemes (see also Table 3.2 on page 31)

Scheme	Description	Example	Reference
Community buses	Generally run by volunteers using a locally owned vehicle on a non-profit making basis. Can be used for group travel or on a many-to-one basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornwall: two community buses take Scouts to and from their weekly meetings. • Congleton, Cheshire “Microbus” – a minibus service on Saturdays to give young people access to social and leisure facilities in nearby towns on Saturdays. • In some villages a “village bus” has been set up whereby a minibus is jointly owned and used by a number of community groups. 	UK CTA Tpt for young people
Demand responsive bus services	Route, timetable or stops based on demand. Users make reservations to use service, by phone or Internet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxibus in Coesfeld, Germany – an on-demand service using taxis, visiting fixed stops to a fixed timetable. Only those stops for which reservations are made are visited. 43 per cent of users are school pupils. • Blue Mountains Youth Bus Pilot, NSW – demand responsive bus servicing 26 towns to “youth-friendly” destinations (see Case study 4.3) • Hawkesbury Youth Transport, NSW, provides a “drop home service” from Saturday night disco. 	VIRGIL 2000 Khong (2003) Khong (2003)

Table 5.4 continued

<p>Bus brokerage</p>	<p>This involves a transport co-ordinator facilitating sharing of vehicles, and providing centralised insurance and financial and technical advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BAT Bus, Byron, NSW – fund worker to broker buses to transport young people to social opportunities for rurally isolated (see Case Study 4.4) • YOWI (Youth on Wheels Inc.), Lismore, NSW. Transport is for social, recreational, or sporting purposes generally in groups of 10 or more. • “Wheels 4 All” Minibus brokerage scheme (UK), encourages the concept of vehicle sharing, provides access to 40 minibuses across Hambleton and Richmondshire. 	<p>Transport NSW; Khong 2003)</p> <p>The Countryside Agency (2003)</p>
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Case Study 5.2. Blue Mountains Youth Bus Pilot, Blue Ridge Mountains, NSW

The Blue Mountains Youth Bus was a trial conducted over a nine-month period in 2002. It offered a transport service that connected villages and townships in the lower mountains to railway stations, and “youth-friendly” destinations, for example, the ice rink, ten pin bowling, cinema, Penrith Plaza and other destinations that were requested.

Prior to the project implementation, young people were asked what they wanted; which days, times and where they wanted to travel to.

The programme relied on funding. To achieve this the pilot project was put into council business plans and road safety strategic plans. The bus was provided by a local bus operator, with the costs being split 50:50 between the scheme and the service provider. A small fee of \$1 per person was charged, this helped to offset costs and also gave the young people some ownership of the scheme. Unfortunately the scheme is no longer operating due to lack of funding.

5.2.4 Motor vehicle schemes

As indicated above, the lack of suitable transport services in rural areas means that many rural young people consider being able to drive, and owning a motor vehicle, to be a necessity. Those unable to drive, or unable to afford to buy a car or motorcycle are often left immobile and isolated. Many rural young people face the situation where, without a job, they cannot afford to buy a motor vehicle and without a vehicle of their own they cannot travel to work or take part in a training course.

Schemes have been developed in the United Kingdom to address this problem in respect of employment, educational and training opportunities. These schemes, known as “Wheels to Work” (W2W) schemes, aim to provide transport solutions to individuals who are experiencing difficulties in accessing training, employment and/or educational opportunities due to a lack of suitable public or private transport⁸. W2W schemes are generally targeted at unemployed people who have received

a firm offer of a job or a training placement but who find that they do not have the means to access the placement. The majority of existing W2W schemes specifically target young unemployed people, with the age limit for eligibility typically between 16 and 25 years. W2W clients must demonstrate financial need in terms of their own transport solutions. The W2W program focuses on the provision of a personal mode of transport to an individual e.g. loan of a moped, power assisted bike or bicycle.

In November 2003 there were over 20 W2W schemes in operation in the United Kingdom, with a number of other schemes under consideration.

5.2.5 Ridesharing schemes

Ridesharing schemes involve providing people without their own transport a lift (ride) with motor vehicle drivers who are travelling to the same destination. This is a “private” transport mode as distinct from public transport services.

⁸ The Countryside Agency “Two wheels work”.

Table 5.5: Ridesharing schemes

Scheme	Description	Example	Reference
Car sharing/ volunteer driving schemes	Transport is provided by volunteer car drivers using their own vehicles. The driver picks the client up from their home, takes them to their appointment and brings them back home. A small charge is made to users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Devon County (UK) 15 voluntary car-sharing schemes exist. These schemes are generally used by the elderly. Hawkesbury NSW – fund drivers to transport young people (and others) outside of existing public transport hours. 	Cullinane and Stokes (1998) NSW Transport
Modify Post bus	This involves allowing passengers to ride on Post minibuses (buses taking the mail to rural areas).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post bus services operate in many rural areas of the UK. They reach places regular public transport could not reach. However, they operate on very limited timetables. 	Cullinane and Stokes (1998)
Lift-giving schemes	Informal arrangements by private car owners to give lifts, sometimes on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occur in the UK. Lift givers often advertise their services locally (in a Post Office for instance). Six market towns in Hambleton and Richmondshire (UK) provide transport services using their own vehicles. Between 2001 and 2002, 16 600 trips were taken. Central Coast Link Lift Pilot, NSW. 	Ibid Countryside Agency (2003) Khong (2003)

Case Study 5.3. Central Coast Link Lift Pilot, Central Coast, NSW

Link Lift is a small volunteer driver scheme piloted on the Central Coast over the Christmas Holidays. It was initiated by Dusseldorp Skills Forum, the Central Coast Youth Commitment and a group of volunteers from the Plan-it-Youth mentoring scheme. The scheme targets young people aged between 15 and 19 without viable transport options to access employment, education and training.

Over the Christmas period, a group of five volunteer drivers helped half a dozen young people on a regular or occasional basis to access either pre-vocational training or volunteer work experience.

The scheme received positive feedback from the volunteer drivers, young people, parents, and youth workers.

5.2.6 Cycling and walking

Although cycling and walking are not generally associated with rural areas because of the distances involved and the quality of the cycling/walking environment, these modes are important for some people. This is particularly so for cycling with a variety of facilities and workplaces being within cycling distance for many rural dwellers.

The most common approach to improve rural access by cycling is to develop safe and accessible cycle routes in these areas. In the United Kingdom Sustrans is developing a national cycle network which

involves a plan to cover 8000 miles of dedicated cycle routes throughout the UK. Local authorities in the UK are also endeavouring to develop cycle routes in rural areas (although cycle routes are still more common in urban areas) (Cullinane and Stokes, 1998).

Providing facilities for storage of cycles at public transport stops, or allowing cycles to be carried on public transport services, can also improve mobility for rural young people by facilitating an independent travel mode to link with public transport. However, this may be of only limited use given the low level of public transport service in most rural areas.

In Devon, in the UK, an experimental summer service was set up to provide complementary public transport for the Coast-to-Coast cycle route. It uses converted buses, each of which can carry between eight and 20 bikes as well as passengers. The bus links up with the cycle route and is timed to meet appropriate trains. In 1999 the service carried 5 000 passengers and 4 000 bikes.

The Walking School Bus is an attempt to reduce the risks of walking for the journey to school by having organised walking groups of children with a parent(s) supervising (often a “driver” at the front of the “bus” and a “conductor” and the rear). Walking School Buses are becoming increasingly common; however, this is more of an urban measure than a rural one. The rural walking environment is generally not as safe as the urban one with many roads not having footpaths and vehicles travelling at much higher speeds (albeit generally at much lower volumes).

A relatively recent development are “Cycle Trains” which are cyclists organised on the same basis as Walking School Buses (a group of children cycling supervised by parents while cycling). However, the same safety problems arise with Cycle Trains as with Walking School Buses.

5.2.7 Telematics

Provision of adequate travel information so that potential users can be confident in the service on offer is vital. This is particularly important for demand responsive services. Greater use is now being made of telematics (or ICT, Information and Communications Technologies) for booking purposes, automated scheduling, and for ensuring links to other services.

An example of a telematics service aimed at rural transport users is the Welland Internet Transport Service⁹ (WITS) which is funded through the East Midlands Development Agency. WITS aims to make transport more accessible and easier to use for non-drivers. One of WITS strategies is to make use of new technologies such as the Internet and text messaging.

WITS is currently working to develop new online transport services throughout Rutland and the Welland area. In 2002 they aim to provide a new online service for young people aged 16–21 which will include: discounted taxi fares and online booking, discounted bus fares, transport forums, and links to youth oriented services and events to travel to.

5.2.8 Transport Subsidies and Grants

There are a number of subsidies or grants that can aid in youth transport. Transport initiatives provided as part of a W2W scheme can involve:

- a contribution towards public transport fares;
- subsidised driving lessons can target those not willing or can't ride a moped and those that do have access to a private car; and
- provision of general transport and advice and public transport information.

The Hawkesbury Youth Transport Project (NSW) run by Hawkesbury Community Transport group offers, in addition to a number of other initiatives, a free cab scheme where “cab charge vouchers” are provided each month to young people forming the schemes target client group. The subsidy is available for young people from isolated parts of the Local Government Area. Non-refundable vouchers are provided rather than cash which removes the temptation of spending it on other things.

5.2.9 Bringing facilities to communities (Outreach)

A different approach to increasing the accessibility of rural people to facilities (amenities and services) is, instead of providing transport services to larger centres, to bring the facilities to the rural communities. This essentially involves providing mobile versions of facilities which are located in the larger centres. Examples of mobile facilities aimed at rural young people are shown in Table 5.6 (page 60).

⁹ The WITS Project on www.rutnet.co.uk/wits

Table 5.6: Bringing facilities to communities (Outreach) – examples

Facility	Description	Reference
The Playbus	Take playschools out to isolated and “hard to reach” communities. These playschools offer play and learning opportunities to very young children.	UK CTA Tpt for young people
Training bus	In Northumberland the district’s Playbus has been revamped to include provision for training and advice for young people and families. This Playbus/training bus serves 30 villages and calls each village once a fortnight.	Ibid
Health care van	In Tynedale the Community Health Improvement Project funds a van which takes primary healthcare and advice out to the rural community, with the services primarily aimed at young people and families.	Ibid
Mobile Cybercafe	Recently launched in Oxfordshire, this converted double-decker bus has a café with laptops downstairs and a comfortable lounge upstairs. Rural Online Mobile Project (ROMP) (also see case study section 4.5, the Murrindindi Cyberbus)	Ibid

As can be seen from Table 5.6, a wide range of facilities could be made mobile and taken out to rural communities. This would alleviate the need for travel

for a number of activities which rural young people wish to undertake, and thereby assist in reducing the scale of disadvantage faced by rural young people.

Cast Study 5.4. The Rural On-line Mobile Project (ROMP), Wiltshire, UK

The ROMP project is aimed at young people between the ages of 13 and 19. The ROMP bus is a 22 seater bus converted to seat up to 15 people in a social setting. There is an area to do craft activities, use the computer (internet access is available via a mobile phone connection), listen to music, and make hot drinks and toast.

The service is free, with funding coming from other sources to offset the cost of providing the service.

The ROMP goes out to four different villages per week and returns to the same village on a weekly basis. Village locations where there are groups of young people and no local facilities are specifically targeted. In addition to this the Wiltshire County Council along with the young people and their local communities are attempting to develop some other form of permanent youth provision.

5.3 Improvements suggested by young people

As part of the consultation program undertaken as part of this project, young people were asked to make suggestion for improvements to transport in their area.

The web based questionnaire asked the following question:

Do you have any suggestions for improvements to transport to help young people in your area?

Table 5.7 (page 61) shows the results of a summary analysis of the responses made to this question. Responses from written submissions have been

added to this table which provides a summary from the whole of the consultation process.

Responses were almost completely concerned with the provision of better public transport, mainly local bus services. Of these most emphasised the need for provision of some or more public transport. Of this the need to run a new local bus service within settlements or between larger towns was emphasised.

The provision of smaller buses or even community buses was seen as a potential part of this solution.

Young people would be helped if some sort of bus system was in place.

(Bouliia, Queensland)

The local bus company need to supply more than school buses.

(Castlemaine, Victoria)

Some form of public transport, at LEAST between

towns. Also, the provision of a community bus for EVERY country town so that at least the community groups can provide some transport.

(Northcliffe, West Australia)

Table 5.7: Suggested transport improvements to assist young people in rural and regional Australia

Transport mode	Comment	Frequency of comment
Public transport	More public transport, provide some public transport.	43
	Run a local bus service with low fares/run a bus shuttle/run a community bus.	35
	Provide a public transport connection/link to larger centres.	32
	Provide higher frequency services/more connections.	26
	Provide more/some services on weekend services.	25
	Develop more/some community transport.	24
	Increase funding for more buses/more service.	21
	Expand concession system to reduce fares for young people.	18
	Lower fares for young people.	17
	Provide more public transport in the evening.	12
	Coordinate buses so you can change between them easier.	9
	Increase the coverage of services into areas not served.	8
	Provide on demand bus or taxi services.	4
	Provide accessible bus services for people with disabilities.	3
	Make public transport more reliable.	3
	Run bus routes less indirectly.	3
	Provide more comfortable buses.	1
Car (driver/lift)	Encourage car owners to give youths a lift.	5
	Make fuel/insurance cheaper to run cars more economically for young people.	2
	Provide cheaper (local) driver training for the young.	2
Taxi	More taxis in our area.	3
	Subsidise cheaper taxi fares.	3
	Taxi sharing schemes.	1
Bike	Upgrade bike paths.	1
Issues for government	Consider transport implications of government policies which centralise and rationalise local facilities.	4
	Provide more outreach education services so we don't have to travel as far.	2
	Have a youth transport voucher to use on all transport.	1

Source: Phase 1 Consultation Submissions.

There was a distinct emphasis on the provision of more evening and weekend services by young people.

Weekend transport for activities in the wider community.

(Yarrawonga, Victoria)

It would be good if there could be a bus service to and from our town, at least on Fridays and Sundays, so we could get home for weekends and go back on Sunday evening.

(Rolleston, Queensland)

Increased public transport generally during the times that youth are likely to access for social activities, being evenings and weekends.

(Bellarine, Victoria)

In remoter communities even an occasional link a few times a week was seen as a solution:

We need a few small buses across the region that go around to surrounding towns or regional centres once or twice a week so we can access services.

(Snowtown, South Australia)

Possibly getting a regular bus run out here, possibly once a week or even once a fortnight, to go to town and do what you want.

(Clare, Queensland)

Others pointed out that in smaller communities running a bus service in conjunction with community groups would be effective in both targeting needs and bringing communities together.

Most small rural and regional/remote communities have at their core, an enthusiastic and committed community group – were a bus service to operate through the efforts of this group, in conjunction with the Local Government Authority and State or federal funding (ongoing), most of this need could be met. There are a number of working examples of a community bus operating from small communities, to extend services to ALL people across the community to access sport, culture and social activities within their region. A small fee or donation is received from passengers, and fundraising activities in the community meet operational costs of the vehicle.

(Injune, Queensland)

Submissions emphasised that public transport fares must be kept low and that specific subsidies were an essential component for participation of young people in some important activities.

Buses to take us to the city, but the price must be reasonable or else this is just a waste of time.

(Ingham, Queensland)

I seek your support to gain free student travel for

regional post compulsory students participating in Structured Workplace Learning on private bus services, so that they may attend “Off the Job” training and “On the Job” training, when a suitable host employer in their hometown cannot be found.

(Bussleton, West Australia)

Transport funding was a theme of many submissions. Several noted the need for subsidy since services in low density communities could not be cost-effective. One submission pointed to a successful transport service which had been funded as a 12-month pilot and was now seeking to obtain ongoing funding:

We have been successful in gaining funding from FACS Innovative and Collaborative Youth Services to provide a regular timetables transport service between communities. The continuation of the service is crucial in continuing to provide (youth) access to activities, employment and training. Funding will cease soon and we are continually looking for a way to sustain this service.

(Goondiwindi, Queensland)

The Innovative and Collaborative Servicing (ICYS) pilots referred to in the submission were funded by FaCS for a finite period of 12 months. All of the ICYS pilots were expected to pursue strategies for sustainability beyond the 12-month funding period.

Only a handful of submissions suggested using other transport modes as a basis for improving transport for young people in rural and regional Australia. Several suggested developing a way in which providing lifts to young people. Some concerns regarding access to driver training were made:

Have a driving instructor come to rural towns every month to do tests and to provide driving instruction. Find a cheaper way to provide young people with driving lessons.

(Port Wakefield, South Australia)

A series of submissions suggested changes in wider government policies with regard to rural and regional transport. Amongst these the need to recognise the transport impacts on local communities of centralising and/or rationalising local services and facilities was stressed.

Conclusions

It is clear that young people strongly value the independence which provision of adequate public transport could bring to their lives. This is an interesting finding when contrasted against the evidence of current travel behaviour. The use of the private car, mainly through getting lifts, is the dominant medium to long-distance travel mode

for young Australians in rural and regional areas. However suggestions to improve access to getting lifts were few and vastly outweighed by suggestions for improved public transport. It is a reasonable supposition that young people are seeking options for greater independence in their travel as well as options for increasing mobility.

It is no surprise that suggestions for more night-time and weekend public transport services and also lower fare options dominated improvement options. These issues were the focus of comments regarding existing problems with transport (Chapter 2). They also tended to be made in regional Australian centres where some existing public transport services were provided.

In remoter Australia the provision of even a single weekly connection was seen as an attractive option compared to the current lack of any service at all.

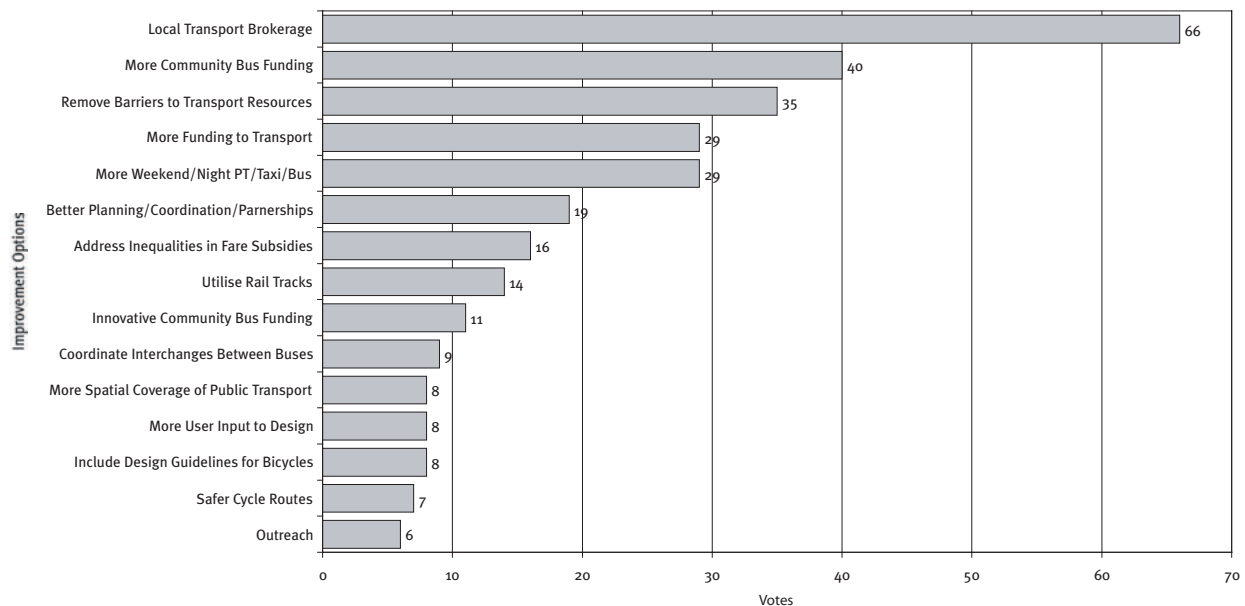
Suggestions for improved public transport services also recognised a role for community-run transport services as part of a general public transport system for all.

5.4 Market testing of improvement ideas

5.4.1 Previous studies

A series of transport improvement options aimed at helping young people in rural and regional areas were presented to a workshop in Launceston Tasmania in March 2003 (Booz Allen Hamilton 2003). This workshop included 40 participants, mostly youth workers, transport providers and young people. Figure 5.1 shows the rating of transport improvement ideas based on a voting system where 10 points were permitted by each participant to value the importance of improvement options to young people.

Figure 5.1: Rating of transport improvement options for young people (Stakeholder workshop – 2003)

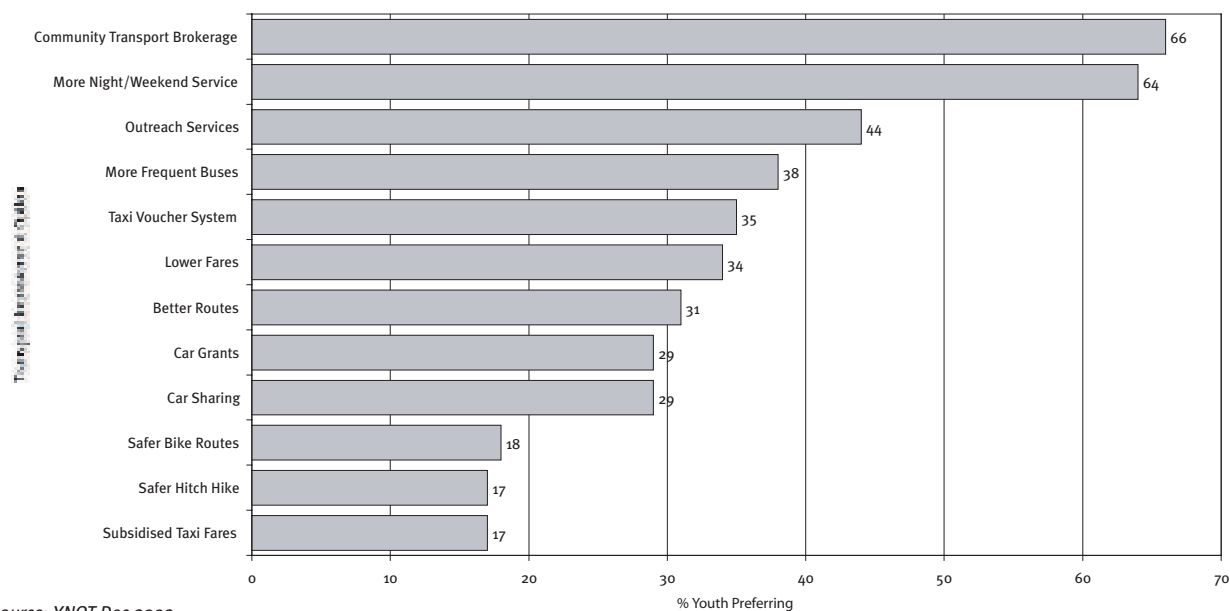


Source: *Tasmanian Youth Transport Strategy, Booz Allen Hamilton 2003.*

Community transport options were favored in this forum including a major preference for better sharing of available community buses and cars

using a brokerage model. This preference was also highlighted by young people consulted by YNOT as part of the same study (Figure 5.2 on page 64).

**Figure 5.2: Rating of transport improvement options by young people
YNOT consultations 2002**



Source: YNOT Dec 2002.

Although a preference for bus brokerage type schemes was shared in both sets of findings, the YNOT results also demonstrated secondary preferences for more late night/weekend public transport services. This measure was also highlighted by young people making submissions via the web survey held as part of this project (see Table 5.7 on page 61).

Outreach services, bringing facilities and activities into rural communities, was more heavily supported in the YNOT findings. This was less heavily supported in the Launceston workshop and was not mentioned by young people in the project web survey. The contrast in support may partly be explained by the location of respondents. Outreach is more heavily supported by people living in remoter areas. People living in major regional centres see little need for such services when they live in towns where such facilities are more readily available locally.

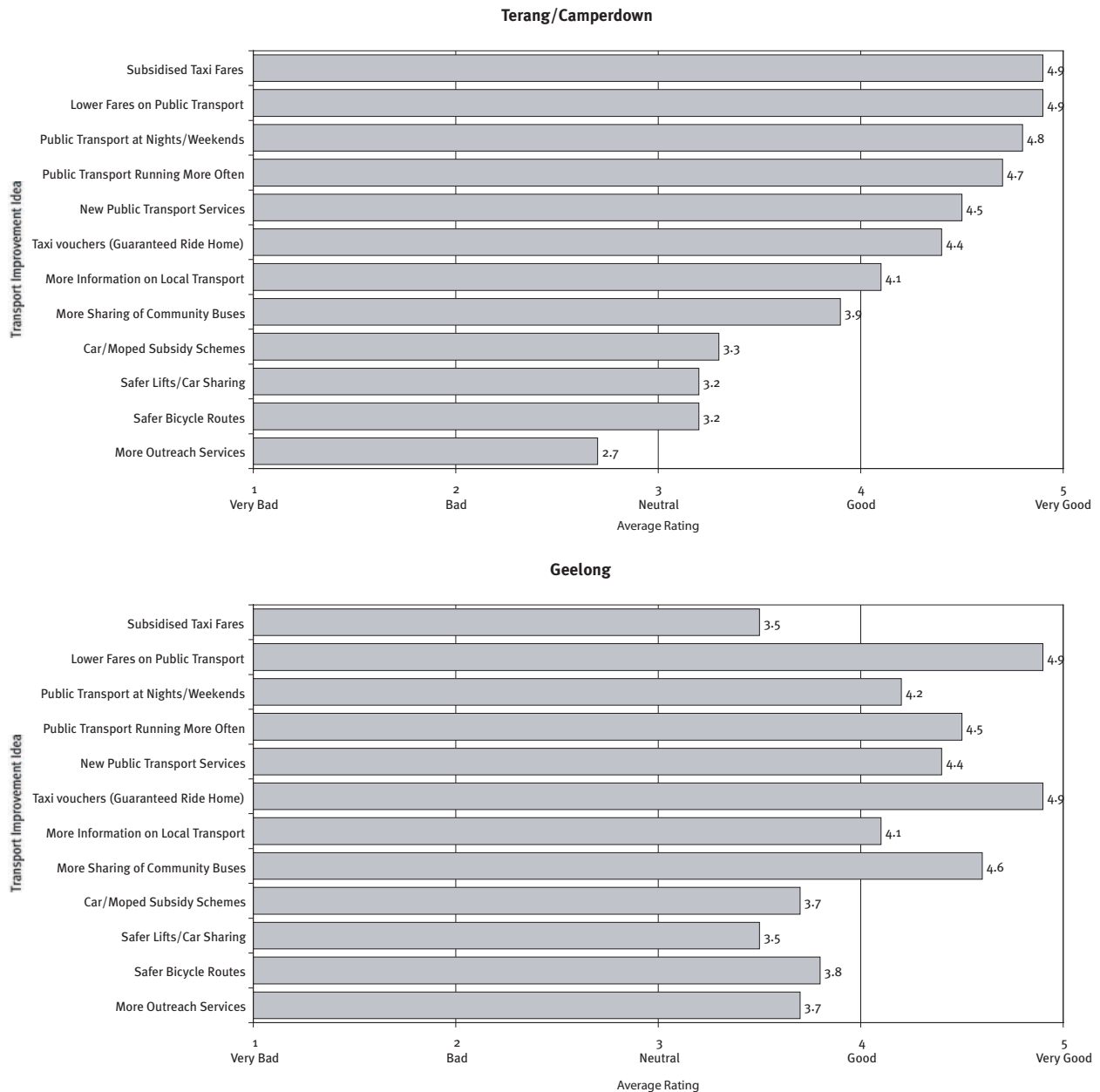
5.4.2 Study market testing

A series of focus groups were held with young

people in rural and regional Victoria to examine views about transport improvement options as part of the project. The focus groups included a description of a range of transport options followed by a questionnaire which asked young people to rate each option. Figure 5.3 (page 65) shows the outcomes of this survey.

In Terang/Camperdown, which are smaller regional centres, options to reduce the cost of transport that could be used independently of others were the highest rated options. Providing subsidised taxi fares and reducing fares on public transport were in this group. Most options had an average rating between “good” and “very good”. The average rating overall was 4.0, an equivalent rating of “good”. The lowest rated items in Terang/Camperdown was more outreach services which rated between “bad” and “neutral”. Safer bicycle routes, safer lifts/car sharing and the car/moped subsidy scheme were also lower rated with scores closer to the “neutral” category in Terang/Camperdown.

Figure 5.3: Average rating of transport improvement ideas – Market testing focus group survey



Source: Rural and Regional Young People and Transport Focus Groups.

In Geelong, which is a major regional city, lower public transport fares also rated highest, however the taxi voucher scheme (much like that described in section 4.4) shared top billing. The Geelong group rated sharing community buses more highly and the subsidised taxi fares less than the Terang/Camperdown group. The overall average score of the transport improvement ideas suggested to the

Geelong group was 4.3. This is a higher rating than that given in Terang/Camperdown.

Outreach services scored lowest in Geelong as well as Terang/Camperdown. Clearly given the large scale of development in Geelong there would be little need for specialist outreach services. Similar conclusions explain the results in Camperdown.

Table 5.8 shows the reasons for the top rated improvement ideas made by focus group participants.

In Terang/Camperdown most comments were made regarding running more public transport at nights and weekends. Although the car/moped subsidy scheme rated modestly in the analysis one

comment suggesting it was a perfect idea was made by a Terang/Camperdown participant.

In Geelong taxi vouchers were one of the highest rated projects. Many comments pointing out their benefits were identified. Although outreach was not supported for Geelong, its relevance for remoter areas was highlighted.

Table 5.8: Reasons (unprompted) for top rating of transport improvements

Transport improvement	Terang/Camperdown	Geelong
Lower fares on public transport	Help young people on low incomes	Lower fares – some people are poor Main mode for young people
Public transport running more often	Better caters for more trips There is simply not enough	More options, to get to destination on time Very limited public transport running Should start earlier in the morning
Subsidised taxi fares	Taxis are way too expensive (2) Would be able to get around more It costs \$3 just to get in	Subsidised taxi fares to provide more affordable transport
New public transport services	Easier to get to places	Very limited public transport currently running
Public transport at nights/weekends	Helps you go out and also get home Easier to get to places in the late hours Great for getting home from the pub in town Easier to get around Because we have sport and other outings at weekends	Public transport at night, running more on weekends
Taxi vouchers (guaranteed ride home)	A really good idea (2) You wouldn't have to worry about getting home I might not have the cash	Taxi vouchers are great – prepay them and then when you are pissed, you don't spend all your money and get stranded
More information on local transport	<i>No comments provided</i>	<i>No comments provided</i>
Car/moped subsidy schemes	Perfect idea	Great idea, however low income and unemployed may not be able to afford these and on-road costs

Table 5.9 (page 67) shows the reasons associated with the three lowest ranked transport improvement ideas.

It was clear that outreach was not an appropriate

concept for either the Geelong or Terang/Camperdown areas. Bicycle use was low and young people saw little value in community transport which they were not aware of and/or thought did not exist¹⁰.

¹⁰ At least some community transport was available in all the centres examined.

Table 5.9: Reasons (unprompted) for bottom three lowest ranking of transport improvement ideas

Transport improvement idea (in reverse rank order)	Terang/Camperdown	Geelong
More outreach services	More relevant to remote areas, we have a lot of services locally No need, won't get used People wouldn't use it Too costly to run/A waste of money A really stupid idea unrealistic and unpopular	<i>No comments provided</i>
Safer bicycle routes	No one rides bikes Not many people use bikes	It's quite dangerous for bikes and cars to be on the same road
Safer lifts/car sharing	<i>No comments provided</i>	<i>No comments provided</i>
More sharing of community buses	There are no local buses No one would drive them	Community transport – don't see relevance
Car/moped subsidy schemes	<i>No comments provided</i>	<i>No comments provided</i>
More information on local transport	<i>No comments provided</i>	Heaps of information, we don't need anymore information
Lower fares on public transport	<i>No comments provided</i>	Car – easy to afford car nowadays: except petrol at the moment

5.5 Assessment

A wide range of transport improvement options have been identified. In general there is widespread evidence of support for these ideas from both young people and youth workers.

Of the transport options identified young people tend to emphasise options which provide greater independence. Improving or providing public transport services at nights and weekends is consistently supported by young people. Where taxi services are more freely available, options to reduce taxi fares are popular with young people.

Community transport is not well understood by young people. Hence it is rare to see it supported as an option for improving travel. However youth workers were more willing to see advantages in this

transport sector. The Tasmanian research in particular stressed the potential of better sharing transport resources which already existed within communities.

Outreach is a more practical solution in rural and remote communities which is where support for such schemes is found.

Overall the viability of transport solutions requires feasibility from both a cost and operational viewpoint. While support from young people will be a key to finding successful solutions young people are not transport experts and are usually unaware of the financial and operational sustainability of transport options. Challenges lie in realising the transport solutions identified within the financial and practical constraints of local resources and government policy.



The way forward

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter identifies ways to address transport issues based on the findings of this project.

6.2 A significant problem

Transport is clearly a substantive issue for young people in rural and regional Australia. Some 1.2 million young Australians live in rural and regional areas. Ninety six per cent of young people in the web survey said local transport was a problem in their area. Travel in rural and regional Australia is “overwhelmingly car-dependent” (Witherby (1993)). Yet only a small proportion of young people can drive or have access to a car. Over half of households in rural and regional Australia own either one or no car. Since young people would usually live with at least two adults (parents) the implication is that car access is extremely limited for at least half of the rural and regional community. Without other travel options, sharing the car is a way of life for these families.

Getting a lift dominates travel options for young people in rural and regional areas (Khong 2003). Yet the most common concern about young people in the web survey regarding lifts was that it made young people dependent on others, usually parents. Some travel options, usually long-distance trips, were onerous tasks for the family drivers. Taking a day out to “taxi” other people is a significant imposition on both lifestyle as well as potentially productive activities for parents. Seeking lifts from strangers

via hitchhiking can be a dangerous activity. This fact is often traded off for young people looking for more independent travel options. Statistics suggest that young women are more likely to get lifts than young men. There is also some evidence that young women find access to activities, such as recreational activities, a more significant issue than young men.

Public transport is a very popular transport option for young people. However usage varies by area, usually based on the availability of services. In general, bus services (where they are provided) operate at low frequencies and rarely cover nights and weekends. These are the times when young people want to travel since during the day they are at school, college or work. Nevertheless public transport remains a significant transport option where it is provided mainly because it provides independence. In practice often no public transport services are available in rural and regional Australia. This is because bus services are provided in only selected urban centres. School buses, which are more widely available, cater for specific groups to specific destinations.

The overwhelming conclusion of both previous research and from input by young people in the consultations was that lack of transport options significantly limited educational, employment and social opportunities. Overseas research terms this effect “social exclusion”. It is clear that significant proportions of the young population of rural and regional Australia risk being marginalised in their access to the activities and opportunities which are

more freely available to urban communities. Statistical evidence demonstrates high unemployment rates for young people in rural and regional areas. Education participation levels are also low.

It is possible to link these concerns to feelings young people have of isolation. Links to issues such as high rural suicide rates for young people and drug and alcohol abuse are easy to make given these findings.

There is also evidence that this issue is getting worse. Rationalisation and centralisation of rural services and facilities to major regional centres increases the scale of the transport task. Some researchers have noted the increased need for people to use transport services, in order to access medical facilities, as a result of the trend towards centralisation (Bragg and Reedy 2001). There is a danger that the “vicious cycle of rural car dependence” increases the marginalisation of young people in the community.

6.3 Transport options to promote

The following transport improvement options will be effective in addressing the transport needs of young people living in rural and regional Australia:

- expansion and enhancement of service levels for conventional public transport services. Particular attention to expansion of services at nights, weekends and holidays will be highly effective;
- expansion and development of transport services using community transport resources. The concept of better use of existing resources through brokerage schemes is a popular suggestion amongst the professional youth services sector;
- schemes to assist in training and ownership of motor vehicles including motorbikes. These schemes are probably best suited to situations where access to employment opportunities are being sought;
- ridesharing schemes which assist to increase car occupancy as long as safety and cost-sharing issues are addressed;
- cycling and walk access improvement schemes. These will be suited to specific locations and circumstances. For example, they could be suitable for some medium sized rural settlements and major regional centres;
- telematic schemes or schemes where transport information and communications technologies are used as tools to increase access to transport information;

- transport subsidy schemes which target reductions in travel use costs to specific groups; and
- outreach schemes which seek to bring services to remoter communities.

6.4 Key success factors

Section 4.8 reviewed key factors in good transport projects which providers thought had resulted in success. In seeking a way forward to addressing transport issues these factors should be emphasised:

Local Youth and Community Involvement – The travel needs of young people is a complex business. They can only be understood and addressed through consultation with young people. In every best practice transport case, young people and wider community stakeholders were involved in transport system development. “Buy in” from these groups is an essential success factor.

Sustainable Funding – No transport project can survive without a financial and resource backing. The preponderance of successful transport projects for young people in rural and regional NSW is largely the result of the NSW community transport program (and associated funding policies). Where funding is limited much work is required to seek alternative funding sources. A major theme of successful projects was the uncertainty and time spent in seeking sustainable funding. At least two of the five best projects we talked to believed they were losing the funding battle. Any failure of these projects will be because of a lack of sustainable funding, not because the projects have failed to prove substantial value in addressing transport needs.

The Organiser – A Valuable Resource – Some very special people were behind the success of every best practice transport project we reviewed. The diverse range of skills required to generate a successful project stand in stark contrast to the modest salaries these people are paid. A major theme of discussions with workers in the youth sector was the high turnover of experienced staff which characterises this profession. Retaining skilled workers is a significant weakness in developing transport services for young people in rural and regional Australia. The lack of consistent (and shared) experience and retention of intellectual capital is a major problem.

The Communication Barrier – Young people often don’t understand transport. Transport providers often don’t understand young people. Finding a way to overcome this communication problem will be an important step in improving the availability of transport to young people.

Utilising Existing Transport – Most successful transport projects leveraged existing transport to provide better services. Adding value in this way is a significantly cheaper alternative than investing in new services. Using the skills and experience of the existing transport professional to provide services was another theme. This adds value and improves the viability of existing services, resources and businesses. Adding new resources is unlikely to be financially viable on any substantive scale. It will also stretch the capacity of prevailing transport support services and potentially harm viability.

A High Profile, Visibility and Promotion – All successful projects were well promoted. Good advertising, catchy project names, distinctive vehicle liveries (or colour schemes) and “event based” promotion were used in all cases. Leveraging the good will of local business and media was a common thread of success.

6.5 Challenges to government

6.5.1 Funding improved transport

Sustainable funding is a key success factor for effective transport.

None of the above transport improvements are feasible without the application of at least some financial resources. It is unlikely that any of the schemes identified will be financially viable from a commercial viewpoint. Using commercial fares as a revenue source is misguided when dealing with young people since they have limited or no income to support travel costs.

Funding will be a significant challenge since funding comes with risks to government. Providing direct support to transport schemes can be an open-ended activity. Most transport schemes require recurrent rather than capital funding. Recurrent funding implies a long-term commitment. This can grow as needs develop and costs increase.

Clearly lower-cost and cost-effective transport improvement options warrant priority attention because of this. Transport improvement options which better utilise existing transport would clearly have advantages over those which require new transport. Of the options identified, the following have lower-cost and even some cost-saving opportunities:

- community transport brokerage schemes entail better use of existing resources. Many schemes are organised around existing private transport operators as well as community organisations. Because the aim is better use of existing resources, costs tend to be marginal;

- walking and cycling schemes require infrastructure to develop cycle storage areas or cycle and walk paths. However once operational there are few recurrent costs;
- information and communications-based schemes have initial set-up costs. However once developed users who receive the benefit of the information can usually fund operations of the scheme at low/modest costs to the user;
- ridesharing schemes also have high setup costs. Management of the schemes is an ongoing cost however transport costs can be shared amongst those who use ridesharing schemes. Because these costs are shared they can be quite modest; and
- a similar situation to the above can apply for motor vehicle sharing schemes as long as capital costs for vehicles can be supported. Running costs can be covered as long as travellers can find an income source. This objective is satisfied when such schemes support those in the community seeking access to work.

6.5.2 Targeting needs effectively

Effective transport improvement options require careful targeting of schemes to local needs. This requires an understanding of local problems and “buy in” and involvement from young people. These principles are key success factors to effective transport improvement options identified in Chapter 4.

An understanding of local transport problems can only be achieved locally. The Australian Government and State and Territory Governments are too removed to address this requirement. Local government is the obvious government agent to manage this task.

An inclusive and consultative approach is required to target needs since even local government agencies will be unlikely to understand the range of issues occurring in dispersed and often remote regions. Key stakeholders include:

- the representatives of government services. This includes health, education and social services agencies;
- transport providers including private bus operators, taxi companies and local traffic engineers; and
- key community organisations including community transport operators.

An effective organisation to understand and address local transport needs in rural and regional Australia is a transport committee convened by local government which includes representatives from the above organisations. Ideally such a committee might

be run by a local government sustainable transport officer whose role is to identify transport needs and to match available resources to needs.

Such an arrangement is unlikely to get far without at least some resourcing from other levels of government. Providing funding tied to the formation of such a group may be an effective means of encouraging suitable governance of transport issues.

6.5.3 A strategic gap in knowledge and experience

The most progressive activity we have identified relating to young people and transport in rural and regional Australia was the national seminar held by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum in February 2003. This was the first and only national attempt to bring together ideas and experiences in this area. In our view the web site maintained by this community group is Australia's best source of information on transport for young people.

Enquiries made to those involved in this forum have revealed a rather alarming situation. Most of those involved in this forum have left working in the youth sector to find work in better paid activities. Only a handful of people involved in this forum and the web site itself (now two years old) are the only remaining links to the knowledge gained from this one-off activity.

In our view there is a strategic problem in how knowledge and experience is managed in relation to this subject matter. When staff turnovers are high, retaining knowledge and experience in an industry is a critical activity. To some extent reports of this type assist in addressing these issues. However a far greater depth of experience needs developing. A process for developing and disseminating knowledge on an ongoing basis is required.

In our view there is a strong case for the formation of a national specialist applied research group to look at local transport issues in rural and regional Australia. This should cover a wider group than young people since transport needs and the means to address them are shared amongst a wider group. Identification, collation and encouragement of good

practices and dissemination of this information would be core activities. This group would have to bridge the gap between conventional transport services and the culture and operations of the community sector.

No such body currently exists in government circles. There is a strategic gap in the coverage and responsibilities of government as well as our understanding and knowledge of transport issues.

6.5.4 Overlaps and gaps in government responsibilities

The national interest

The Australian Government has made it clear that the management and responsibilities for local public transport is the concern of the States and Territories. The Australian Governments' central transport policy platform, AusLink (DoTARS 2004) does not address local public transport issues for this reason. Because of this no national government body exists to consider local passenger transport issues on a nationwide basis¹¹.

Moves to bring together State and Territory transport agencies for local public transport in a national group have occurred through the Standing Committee on Transport's Public Transport Modal Group. However these moves are somewhat new, hence it is premature to comment on the performance of this group.

A major funding source for local passenger transport services in rural and regional Australia is the Australian Government operating through the *Home and Community Care Program*. Although this program is a significant base of local public transport it is not managed with the broader needs of the community in mind. Rather it has a very tight focus on the provision of services for the frail aged and those with disabilities; the HACC target group. This constrains the use of valuable transport resources, which are often underutilised, in communities which are clearly in need of additional services¹².

A related concern is that government service providers in the health, education and community services sector must provide for transport separately. There is no national and few local

¹¹ The Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT) is the senior coordinating body reporting to the Australian Transport Council (ATC). ATC comprises transport Ministers from all Australian jurisdictions and the Australian Government. The ATC is a consultation forum and provides advice to governments on the coordination and integration of all transport and road policy issues at a national level. However of the 16 inquiry reports available on the ATC's web site since 1998, none directly concern local public transport access issues and virtually none of the 19 communiqués available since 1996 mention any of the local or community transport issues of the kind identified in this document. The ATC's principal concern is national road infrastructure, national rail, air and sea links, freight and transport safety. The main areas where local public transport issues have been touched on are in relation to safety and also to transport access for persons with disabilities related to the Federal Disability Discrimination Act.

¹² It is not clear if this problem is an issue for the Australian or for State/Territory governments. While HACC is run by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aging a great deal of the management is devolved to the local jurisdictions for implementation. Nevertheless it is Australian Government HACC guidelines which limit the use of HACC funded vehicles to their "target" group. Available HACC vehicles can be used for the broader community as long as services provided are paid for on a "full cost recovery" basis.

policies, organisations or expertise to assist them in coordinating services on a local scale.

The result is at best a segmented and minimalist approach giving preference to specific needs with disregard to a wider and more substantial problem. At worst it is an inefficient and ineffective “dog’s breakfast”. It is a significant and potentially impossible task to bring together these various elements into a coordinated transport system without a central body providing direction.

We take the view that there is a clear role for Australian Government leadership in this area. Centralised government and the power that Australian Government can have as a major funding agent can produce a significant momentum for better coordination. There is much potential for better use of Australian Government funds through increased sharing of transport resources which are already paid for.

State/Territory programs and policies

State-based policies have seen some excellent developments in coordinating policy measures and plans. NSW has had a long running program of investment in local community transport. Victoria and South Australia have different versions of a similar concept. We suggest that similar programs be developed throughout Australia. Australian Government involvement in supporting and encouraging best practice seems warranted.

The marginalisation of transport needs

There is some evidence from this review that transport needs have grown as the centralisation of government and commercial facilities has moved

these facilities into larger regional and urban centres. Several of those consulted suggested that cost savings from rationalisation and centralisation of facilities have been made whilst a greater need for travel has been imposed on rural and regional residents. It is clear that no comprehensive assessment of the travel implications of these plans is being undertaken. Transport needs are being marginalised and ignored. This risks disenfranchising a significant proportion of the rural community.

6.5.5 No advocate or champion

While transport advocacy groups in metropolitan Australia remain a vocal and powerful force there is no corresponding body in rural and regional Australia. It is common for those involved in youth, health or educational service provision to advocate for transport. However this is one of many activities undertaken by these groups. No single State/Territory or national voice exists. It is not the role of government to encourage a coordinated and powerful advocate for change. However it seems unlikely that change can be encouraged without some form of champion. The national associations of youth, social services and education sector bodies should consider encouraging such a group in cooperation with national local government and transport industry bodies. A model for such a group exists in NSW with the State-based Community Transport Group. A similar national body exists in the UK called the Community Transport Association. However none of these bodies are solely concerned with rural and regional transport issues. Linkages with metropolitan transport interest groups may be worthwhile.

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