



## **South Australian Community Transport Association response**

### **20 year State Infrastructure Discussion Paper**

**15<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

On behalf of the community transport sector, the South Australian Community Transport Association (SACTA) welcomes an opportunity to be actively involved in the SA Infrastructure Discussion with community transport playing a large and vital role in both metro and regional SA. Within the discussion paper, community transport has not been recognised for the valuable assistance it provides to those more vulnerable in the community.

With a public transport system that is predominately focused on getting people into the CBD, not generally across the suburbs, community transport fills a large gap in the current public transport system. Especially in regional areas that have limited or NO public transport network, community transport plays an even more vital role in assisting South Australians to access services to meet their daily needs. The level of cooperation between the public and community transport operators is fragmented at best, as the public operators have long seen the community transport providers as poor cousins and at times a threat to their business.

With an ever ageing population here in SA and a decline in the patronage of the public system, community transport providers are being asked to do more with less, assisting some of the most vulnerable members of the SA community.

Community transport providers are extremely concerned about the planned aged care reforms which will follow the NDIS model which places all funds with the client. This reform has not considered transport as a key component to keeping people actively engaged and underfunding has left many isolated and disconnected.

With uncertainty around both state and federal government funding into the future, many service providers are considering what the future may look like moving forward, with several local Councils already withdrawing services. Future discussions on state spending MUST take into account the role community transport plays in the bigger picture.

Any discussions on future needs, must include representation from community transport service providers to ensure that the voices of community transport users are heard and understood. With approx. 500,000 community transport trips being provided each year here in SA, the future requirements of our ageing population needs to be addressed as a collective through the eyes of the commuter and the service providers. Any future plans for SA need to consider the important role

currently being played by community transport across both metro and regional areas and how this role may move forward into the future.

Yet there are also proactive state models being established in Tasmania that should be considered:

- Community transport and public bus services have developed new models of working together to better serve the community. [www.areaconnect.org.au](http://www.areaconnect.org.au)
- The state has proactively continued funding the Tasmanian HACC programme which has continued supporting clients that have not transitioned to NDIS and also those who have.
- As commonwealth (CHSP) funding is expected to transition from block funding to sit with the client. It is recognised that due to bi-lateral agreements the Tasmanian government understands that any transport gaps will become the states responsibility and therefore come at a great cost if this CHSP model continues with the NDIS model.

SACTA provides representation to the national community transport peak body ACTA (Australian Community Transport Association) and the concerns raised about the proposed changes to future CHSP block funding is of national consequence. I have attached a letter from the ACTA chair which summarises the national concerns.

On behalf of the members of SACTA, we look forward to working with you in the future and welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues further.

Yours faithfully

[DELETED]

Julie Mason  
**Chair of SACTA**



Australian Community Transport Association

15 August 2019

Hon Stephan Knoll MP  
GPO Box 1533  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Minister Knoll

#### Request for meeting with ACTA Executive and State Representatives

By way of introduction, the Australian Community Transport Association (ACTA) is the national peak body for the community transport sector. We are a coalition of state and territory peak bodies working together for the greater good of community transport consumers and providers.

The Association was formed in January 2011 and comprises representatives from across Australia to provide a national voice for community transport. Further information about ACTA can be found at [www.australiancommunitytransport.org.au](http://www.australiancommunitytransport.org.au)

In its short history ACTA has demonstrated the advantages associated with having a national peak body. Through having representation from all states and territories we have been able to engage with federal Ministers and bureaucrats and other relevant national peak bodies to make known our concerns about the transition to the Commonwealth Home Support program (CHSP) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in particular.

In providing specialist transport services to people frail aged and people with a disability the sector supports each year approximately 250,000 consumers, provides 5.5 million trips, and travels more than 95 million kilometres. Furthermore, the sector employs over 2,200 staff and engages the services of over 8,000 volunteers who give 2.4 million hours, equating to more than 60 million dollars.

Current and future Aged and Disability Care reform presents community transport in Australia with a range of challenges. There are significant reforms occurring across the field of aged care at home. These reforms, some of which have been in place since February 2017, are moving toward a more consumer-driven system of aged care provision, similar to that of the NDIS.

For the time being, a range of services continue to be block funded under the long-standing provisions of the CHSP; transport is one of those services. The CHSP is described by the Department of Health as an 'entry-level aged care program' designed to provide small amounts of a single service

or a few services to many frail older people who require only a small amount of assistance to remain independent.

ACTA has assessed that the proposed changes to the aged care transport funding model would risk the sustainability of the sector. ACTA has been advocating at a commonwealth level to retain the current block funding regime for state and territory providers. The removal of block funding would create significant risk in that consumers of community transport nationwide would lose this much relied upon service and place substantial pressure on state and territory infrastructure, ultimately reducing the consumers' ability to connect with health services and social activities.

The ACTA Board has the support of all Directors and Members on its current position on the future transport funding model for aged care.

Therefore, we respectfully encourage SACTA representatives: Julie Mason and Craig Frost to be actively involved in the 20 year Infrastructure Discussion and any other meetings that may be required.

Yours sincerely

[DELETED]

Lyndon Stevenson  
Chairman  
ACTA Board  
M: [DELETED]  
E: [DELETED]