



# North East Transport Connections Project

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NTCP

Partnership Group Approved September 2011



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## 1. Introduction

The North East Transport Connections Project (NTCP) commenced in the region in July 2007 and is one of 34 projects funded by the Department of Planning and Community Development's (DPCD) Transport Connections Program (TCP) in Victoria. NTCP was first funded from 2007 to 2010 by TCP phase 2. The project then received TCP3 funding late 2010, with an anticipated project completion date of June 2013.

All TCP are required to develop a Project Action Plan which outlines how TCP objectives will be addressed by the project. In addition the plan should also assist in the identification of projects that are common across a regional area.

The development of NTCP Action Plan includes initiatives contained in Local Action Plan's developed in NTCP 1 and additional initiatives identified by project partner organisations during the current projects planning process. Where possible the plan links to existing strategic directions of partner organisations and takes into account the local planning already undertaken by Council's and the State Government.

## 2. Background

Transport Connections was introduced by the Victorian Government in 2003 initially administered by Department of Human Services (DHS), in partnership with Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), Department of Transport (DOT) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). It was developed to support communities to work together in improve local transport and access and to encourage local communities to be actively involved in decision making processes. Now administered by DPCD, the aim of Transport Connections has evolved over time:

	Year	Aim
<b>Phase 1</b>	2003 - 2006	To address the access needs of transport disadvantaged people in rural and regional Victoria.
<b>Phase 2</b>	2006 - 2010	Through local partnerships more communities will be able to develop new and coordinated approaches to transport that enable people to get around more easily.
<b>Phase 3</b>	2010 - 2013	To develop innovative and efficient responses to the needs of people with limited transport options and to improve access to services, resources, employment and community opportunities.

Phase one included the successful pilot project, "The Valley to the City Efficiently." Based in Mount Beauty this project introduced the Mount Beauty Flexi-bus where by a route bus service was transformed into a flexible door-to-door service which connected isolated passengers with medical appointments, leisure and shopping centres in the regional centre of Wodonga.

The key learning's from this project were the basis from which a partnership across the five Local Government areas of Alpine, Indigo, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga was formed and NTCP emerged. The project covers a geographical area of 17,536 square kilometres.

In the first project phase two staff were employed. The approach was dividing the project by Local Government area. Local Action Groups were established, consisting of community representative who had an interest in transport. The project's focus was on developing trial public services, information booklets as well as some asset mapping. When phase 2 funding ceased in June 2010, the existing staff's contracts also concluded. The steering committee went into recess pending the receipt of additional funds later in 2010. When additional funds were received the project was reignited, two staff were employed, a Project Manager and Project Assistant in 2011.

The current project adopts a holistic and project wide approach, and the initiatives contained endeavour to address transport gaps and barriers to access that are common across the project area. Whilst these initiatives are broad the project will assist local communities through a small grants program addressing concerns that are unique to that community.

### **3. Objectives of Transport Connections 2010 – 2013**

Transport Connections 2010 – 2013 will focus on the needs of communities and individuals who have limited access to transport and will develop options for improved transport and accessibility at a local and regional level.

The objectives are to:

- Develop innovative transport and non-transport solutions to enhance access and participation by people with limited access to transport, **excluding public transport** as a response
- Generate more effective and efficient use of existing transport resources
- Establish sustainable local and regional partnerships for delivering transport and accessible outcomes
- Increase the capacity of communities to participate in decisions making and priority setting activities to improve social and economic outcomes.

### **4. Expected Outcome of Transport Connections**

- More people with greater access to (and participation in) services, e.g.: education, leisure/sport, health, employment and social opportunities.
- Improved coordination of cross-government investment in place
- Increased local capacity for priority setting and informed decision making
- Increased diversity of representation on steering groups to better reflect the make-up/demographic of the community
- TCP responses are appropriate to meet evidence based identified need.

In ten years time it is expected that the following outcome will have been achieved:

***The social, economic, and civic participation of people and communities is increased through having improved accessibility options available to them.***

#### **5. NTCP Target Group**

The target group for NTCP is the residents of the local government areas of Alpine, Indigo, Towong, Wodonga and Wangaratta totalling 96,010<sup>1</sup> people. In particular NTCP's focus is on disadvantaged groups including youth, older persons, those with disabilities and the socially, geographically and economically disadvantaged.

#### **6. Project Funding**

The project will receive \$692,182 over the three years, including brokerage funding. The brokerage fund allows the project to seed or fully fund pilot initiatives, designed to test small scale improvements to local transport and non-transport services and the scope to partner with other organisations to meet community need.

#### **7. Auspice Agency and Project Partners**

Community Accessibility is the projects auspice agency and project partners are Alpine Health, Alpine Shire Council, Ovens & King Community Health, Rural City of Wangaratta, Upper Murray Health & Community Services, Wodonga City and Indigo Shire Council. It is hoped that additional partners will join the project as it progresses. Governance arrangements are outlined in a separate Partnership Agreement.

#### **8. Development of Action Plan Initiatives**

Project initiatives have been sourced from Local Transport Actions Plans developed by Transport Advisory Groups during TCP phase 2, key directions from Local and State Government strategic plans and ideas identified by project partners as part of the project planning process.

#### **9. Transport Vision**

The Department of Transport describe an intermodal model of transport services. Travellers may utilise a number of modes to reach their desired destination. This particularly applies to rural areas, where population and geography limit the practicality for provision of an extensive network of public services.

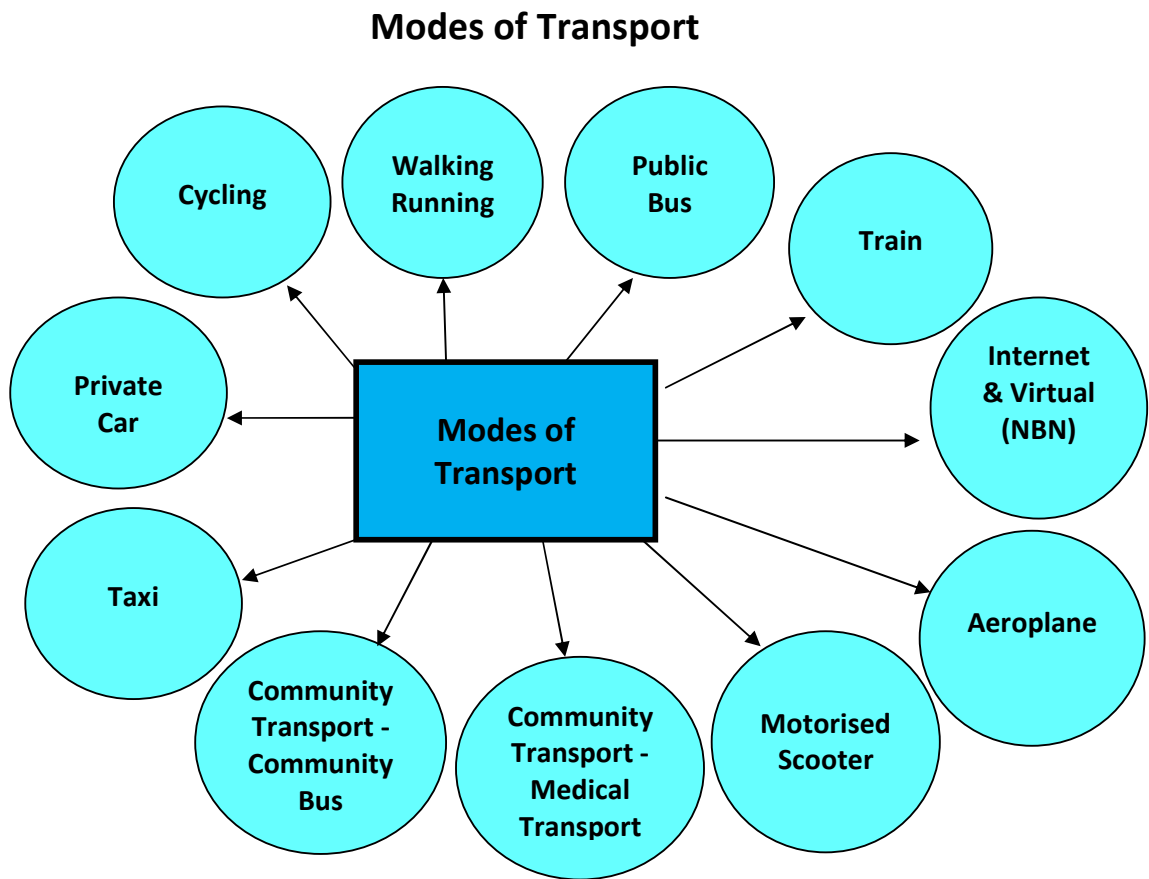
Department of Transport recognise that access is a key determinate of the success of an inter-modal transport model. An objective of NTCP is to improve access systems for one or between various modes of transport by identify and filling the gaps and barriers to

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria in the future 2008 – Department of Planning and Community Development.

successful negotiation of available transport systems. Included in this process is thinking of transport as the connector between people and services, education, health shopping and socialisation. Meaning that transport does not have to be a bus or train, but it can also be improvements in information technology and mobile health or education services. Access to timely and accurate transport options is also considered a key component of this process.

The Action Plan has identified four key areas which have been developed to support an integrated transport model. Local community projects and advocacy are also a key role of NTCP.



#### 10. Environmental Sustainability

Whilst environmental impact and sustainability are not specifically addressed in this plan it is hoped that the project initiatives will have a positive environmental impact. By working to improve access to transport, improving community linkages, building community confidence in public transport and assisting people to change their travel behaviour NTCP will indirectly be addressing the environmental impact of transport.

#### 11. NTCP Main Activity Areas

### **11.1. Community Transport and Access**

Identified by project partners as the number one priority, community transport operates in a variety of forms throughout the project area. This area involves articulating what exists, where the gaps are and what are the possible models for a sustainable future.

Also included is access to specialist medical services, education and support for volunteers who work in the community sector.

### **11.2. Local Community Projects**

The large geographical area covered by NCTP makes reaching smaller communities difficult. To aid in this process NTCP has developed a small grants program, designed to assist in identifying need as well as providing financial assistance to small groups in the community.

### **11.3. Community Linkages & Connections**

Many small communities in the project area are geographically isolated from main townships and regional centres. This theme focuses on endeavouring to link these communities to each other and to main townships. Connections aren't always by means of a motorised vehicle. In the project area a number of multi-purpose pathways, however some do not link to each other nor do end of trip facilities exist that support use of these trails.

### **11.4. Transport Information**

Access to timely and accurate transport information is a key contributor to the utilisation of transport services. Information needs available in electronically via the internet, in printed material, via the telephone and in person.

### **11.5. Transport Behavioural Change**

Working with Health Promotion teams this theme involves supporting activities which promote individuals to adopt an active transport approach in their daily lives.

### **11.6. Advocacy**

NTCP will continue to advocate on behalf of the project for improvements to current transport services and systems where a demonstrated need for change to policy, transport services or systems exists.

## **12. Overview of North East Transport Connections Project Action Plan**

The following is a summary of the NTCP Action Plan initiatives. Full details include the anticipated steps to achieve each initiatives are included in Appendix one of this document.

No.	Action	Outcome
<b>Community Transport and Access</b>		
1.	Community Transport Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community transport is available in local communities to assist with meeting transport gaps</li> <li>• The local transport network is complimented with locally coordinated community transport services</li> <li>• Community Transport is regarded as an essential component of the state transport system</li> <li>• Community Transport is well supported, operating efficiently and effectively meeting the needs of transport disadvantage residents across the region</li> </ul>
2.	Support for Community Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers up skilled and supported.</li> <li>• Volunteers consistently trained across the region.</li> </ul>
3.	Regional Travellers Aid Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better utilisation of transport services</li> <li>• Reduction in travel anxiety</li> </ul>
4.	Access to TAFE & further education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport disadvantaged students can access TAFE and further education opportunities regardless of where they live.</li> </ul>
5.	Access to Specialist Medical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of travel on individuals accessing specialist medical services is reduced.</li> </ul>
<b>Transport Information</b>		
6.	Integrated Transport Information System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport information is consistent across the project area</li> <li>• Information is accessible via a number of avenues</li> <li>• Partnerships between information holders and services is strong and sustaining</li> </ul>
<b>Community Linkages and Connections</b>		
7.	Remote community linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected communities</li> <li>• Improved transport links for isolated communities</li> <li>• Sustainable local transport solutions which is flexible and tailored to specific community need</li> </ul>
8.	Tracks and trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected communities</li> <li>• Trail connections</li> <li>• End of trip facilities</li> </ul>

No.	Action	Outcome
<b>Transport Behavioural Change</b>		
9.	Health Promotion Program that promote changes in transport behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved wellbeing of residents</li> <li>• Reduced vehicle usage</li> <li>• Better utilisation of multi-purpose trails and footpaths</li> </ul>
<b>Local Community Projects</b>		
10.	NTCP Small Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Community transport issues are addressed</li> <li>• Initiatives that have local support will be achieved</li> </ul>
<b>Advocacy</b>		
11.	NTCP acts as an advocate on specific issues related to disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for groups and individuals with specific needs</li> <li>• Liaison with Government and non-government areas in relation to transport.</li> </ul>

### 13. Conclusion

As partners we are well placed to view the transport needs of our communities with both a regional and local lens. NTCP provides the vehicle to address these needs. A key aspect of the project will be its ability to achieve a balance in initiatives that work from the regional, project wide and local level. NTCP enables both top down and bottom up approaches to transport solutions in our area. To succeed however, requires commitment and acknowledgment by partner organisations of the importance and potential of NTCP. NTCP is a community development project which has a focus on transport. It has the ability to add value to existing initiatives and support partners and communities to address their transport concerns for the longer term.

## 14. Glossary of Terms

The following terms have been defined by DPCD Policy Framework and Implementations Plan:

**Auspice Agency** is the organisation that enters into a legally binding funding agreement with DPCD and is accountable to DPCD for achievement of objectives and submission of deliverables under the terms of the funding agreement / letter of offer and outlined in the *Transport Connections Policy Framework and Implementation Plan*.

**Community transport** is not-for-profit transport administered by community organisations that includes community buses operated by Local Councils and community groups.

**Evaluation and Reporting Framework** is a document outlining the overarching principles and strategy for evaluating the Transport Connections projects and program.

**Initiative** is an activity arising out of the implementation of Transport Connections, for example a driver education program, providing easy-to-read timetables, or new use for an aged care bus.

**Innovation Fund** will replace the Flexible Fund to develop and support significant initiatives and will commence July 2011.

**Local initiative** is one delivered within the catchment area assigned to each Transport Connections project in Phases 1 or 2 or considered relevant to one community.

**Local Action Plans** address local access priorities and were developed in Phase 2 (2006 – 2010).

**Project** refers to one of 34 Transport Connections projects delivering initiatives across Victoria, for example, *Let's GET Connected* in East Gippsland and Wellington and *Getting There and Back* in Corangamite, Warrnambool and Moyne.

**Partnership Agreement** will establish the principles, parameters and objectives of the Partnership Group. The Partnership Agreement is not legally binding but will define relationships and contribute to trust between partners.

**Partnership Group** is the primary direction setting body for Transport Connections projects sometimes referred to as the **Steering Committee**.

**Public transport** is any transport network or system that utilises State subsidies to provide a scheduled passenger service that includes train, tram, bus and ferry services.

**Non-transport** in the context of Transport Connections refers to a means of supporting people's access to services, employment and social networks, that do not involve moving people to their desired destination. Examples of these might include outreach models to bring services to people, complementing existing transport

Options by providing clearer information for people about these options, and virtual access (such as through the internet or videoconferencing).

**Regional initiative** is one that operates beyond project catchment boundaries and is developed through working and planning carried out across Transport Connections projects.

**Regional Action Plans** are documents outlining priorities and initiatives involving more than one Transport Connections project.

**Regional Management Forums** are comprised of senior state and local government officers within each state government region. The role of the forum is to provide leadership and flexibility to better respond to local needs. Representation to these groups is undertaken by Local Government Chief Executive Officers or State Government Regional Managers.

**Regional strategic plans** are documents being developed across five State Government regions including Barwon South West, Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume and Gippsland reflecting the region's aspirations for the future and State Government policy, covering economic development, population settlement, environment and management of resources, infrastructure, community wellbeing and other priority areas as determined by the region.

**Regional Cluster Group** will be developed as the regional direction setting body.

**Subregional initiative** refers to project area that comprises of 5 Local Government areas in the project.

**Transport** means moving people from place to place, and includes all modes of conveying people.

## **15. List of Abbreviations**

DOT	Department of Transport
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DHS/DOH	Department of Human Services/Department of Health
DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development
HACC	Home and Community Care
LG	Local Government
NTCP	North East Transport Connections Project
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
TCP	Transport Connections Program

## **16. References**

Alpine Liveability Plan 2009 – Alpine Shire Council  
Indigo Shire Council – Healthy Communities’ Plan - 2010 -2014  
NTCP - Alpine Transport action Plan – June 2010  
NTCP - Indigo Transport Action Plan – June 2010  
NTCP - Wangaratta Transport Plan – June 2010  
NTCP - Wodonga Transport Action Plan – June 2010  
NTCP – Towong Transport action Plan - June 2010  
North East Transport Connections Project Plan 2008  
North East Transport Connections Project – Evaluation and Improvement Strategy – 2010  
North East Transport Connections Project – Partnership Review – 2010  
Transport Connections Phases 3 – Policy Framework & Implementation Plan 2010-2013  
September 2010. Department of Planning and Community Development  
Ready For Tomorrow - Hume Regional Plan – 2010  
Rural City of Wangaratta – Community Wellbeing Plan – 2010 -2013  
Towong Shire Council – Healthy Communities’ Plan – 2009 – 2013  
Upper Murray Health and Community Services - Service Plan 2009 – 2012  
Wodonga Sustainable Transport Strategy – January 2010 – City of Wodonga