Innovative Community Transport Solutions Project
'*Key Findings, Opportunities & Next Steps Report*'

March 2021

EASTERN
**METROPOLITAN
PARTNERSHIP**

VICTORIA
State
Government | Department
of Transport

Contents

Innovative Community Transport Solutions Report - Eastern Metropolitan Partnership

Definitions

Community Transport – local transport provided at low or no cost by not for profit community organisations, local government or the health sector, and usually reliant on volunteers. This service is typically utilised by those in the community who are transport disadvantage or vulnerable users.

On-Demand Transport – On-demand is a form of shared private transport (or quasi-public) for groups travelling where vehicles alter their routes spatially or temporally, based on particular transport demand rather than using a fixed route or timetable. It is also often also referred to as demand-responsive transport (DRT), however will be referred to as "on-demand" throughout this engagement.

DHHS – Department of Health and Human Services. The Department of Health and Human Services delivers policies, programs and services that support and enhance the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

DoT- Department of Transport. Aspires for a transport system that is simple, connected, accessible, reliable, safe and supports a productive, growing economy.

EMP – Eastern Metropolitan Partnership. An advocacy group representing the interests of the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) interests from with input from state department, local government and stakeholder groups.

EMR – Eastern Metropolitan Region of Metropolitan Melbourne. This region is inclusive of the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Monash, Whitehorse, Knox, Maroondah, Manningham and Yarra Ranges.

First mile/last mile services- Typically the first leg of a customer's trip, or the last leg on the return journey. These services are sometimes referred to as 'feeder services' as they deliver passengers to a train station or other public transport hubs.

LGA - Local Government Area. Referred to as a council, and the territories governed are collectively referred to as "local government areas". Terms such as "city" or "shire" are also commonly used. Local government in Australia is the third level of government division in Australia, and is administered by the states and territories, which in turn are beneath the federal level.

Micro transit - defined as a privately or publicly operated, technology-enabled transit service that typically uses multi- passenger/pooled shuttles or vans to provide on-demand or fixed-schedule services with either dynamic or fixed routing. The current implementations result from public-private partnerships or are brought by the private sector directly to the customer.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) - is the integration of various forms of transport services into a single mobility service accessible on-demand. Helping users to optimise their journey using a variety of interconnected modes of transport.

MP2H - Meeting point-to-hub transit. A trip from a virtual stop determined by the operator to aggregate demand to a fixed point, such as a transport hub or a key point of interest.

On-Demand Public Transport - A flexible public transport service designed to improve connections to transport hubs and popular destinations like shopping centres or hospitals. Normally takes multiple passengers within a defined area from one place to another on a next-available or pre-book basis. Programmed shuttles or vans to provide on-demand or fixed-schedule services with either dynamic or fixed routing.

P2P - Point-to-point transit. A trip from anywhere to anywhere within a defined service zone.

P2H - Point-to-hub transit. A trip from any point or address within the service zone to a predefined fixed point. The service must either originate of terminate at the hub.

PTV – Public Transport Victoria. PTV plan, coordinate, provide, operate and maintain a safe, punctual, reliable and clean public transport system consistent with the vision statement and transport system objectives contained in the Transport Integration Act 2010. PTV, VicRoads and DoT came together and now fall under the DoT.

Social isolation – the lack of engagement or contact between an individual and society.
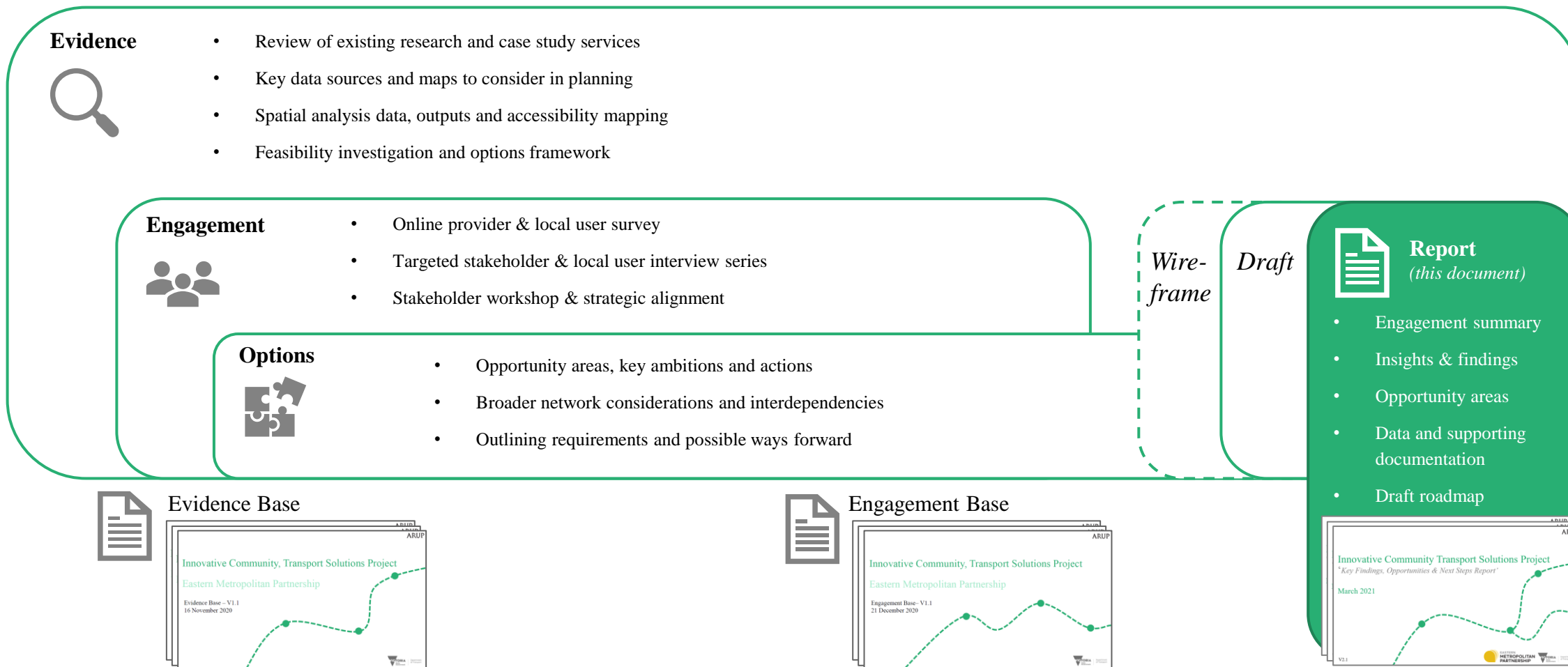
Stakeholders – any parties with interest in the engagement, including user groups.

Vulnerable users – those who are at an increased risk of marginalisation, injury or exclusion in society due to barriers faced. These users may include those within the ageing population, those living with disability, those in marginalised community groups (including CALD considerations), or experiencing other forms of disparity.

Engagement overview

The following diagram outlines work undertaken throughout the engagement of the *'Innovative Community, Innovative Solutions Project'* with key stages and deliverables in research, analysis and reporting.

Previous deliverables of "Evidence Base" and "Engagement Base" can be found in Appendices for reference.

Evidence

- Review of existing research and case study services
- Key data sources and maps to consider in planning
- Spatial analysis data, outputs and accessibility mapping
- Feasibility investigation and options framework

Engagement

- Online provider & local user survey
- Targeted stakeholder & local user interview series
- Stakeholder workshop & strategic alignment

Options

- Opportunity areas, key ambitions and actions
- Broader network considerations and interdependencies
- Outlining requirements and possible ways forward

Wire-frame *Draft*

Report
(this document)

- Engagement summary
- Insights & findings
- Opportunity areas
- Data and supporting documentation
- Draft roadmap

Evidence Base

Innovative Community, Transport Solutions Project
Eastern Metropolitan Partnership
Evidence Base – V1.1
16 November 2020

Engagement Base

Innovative Community, Transport Solutions Project
Eastern Metropolitan Partnership
Engagement Base– V1.1
21 December 2020

Innovative Community Transport Solutions Project
'Key Findings, Opportunities & Next Steps Report'
March 2021

Document overview

ARUP

Technical Evidence Base Report

Executive Summary	Section 1 Context and approach	Section 2 Spatial Analysis	Section 3 DRT Analysis	Section 4 DRT Option Development

Engagement Base Report

Executive Summary	Study Context	Section 1 Surveys	Section 2 Interviews	Section 3 Workshop	Section 4 Additional analysis

Key Findings, Opportunities & Next Steps Report

Executive summary	Section 1. Setting the Scene	Section 2. Challenges and Gaps	Section 3. User Requirements	Section 4. Insights and Evidence	Section 5. Opportunities and Actions	Section 6. Roadmap
• Context	• Project drivers	• COVID-19 implications	• Personas	• Key findings	• Opportunities for regional success	• Roadmap
• Key insights and opportunities	• Engagement aims	• Accessibility	• Value proposition	• Supporting evidence	• Opportunities and possible actions	
• Priority roadmap	• Context	• Digital	• Service needs	• Considerations	• Case Studies	
	• Existing service offerings	• Political		• Provocations		
	• Transport service					
	• Existing systems					

Appendices A **Evidence Base**

Appendices B **Engagement Base**

Innovative Community Transport Solutions Report - Eastern Metropolitan Partnership

Executive Summary

- Context

- Key insights and opportunities

- Priority roadmap

ARUP

Context

The Study

The aim of the *'Innovative Community, Innovative Solutions Project'* is to identify opportunities for private and community transport providers to improve the communities' access to jobs, opportunities, health centres and social hubs, across the Eastern Metropolitan Partnership (EMP) Region. The project seeks to focus on investigating opportunities to **address social isolation and ensure equity of access for all residents and abilities within the region** through improved access to transport services.

As this is an explorative study, it was identified early within the process that the final report needed to be grounded on a strong evidence base, this involved:

- The creation of a **technical evidence document** that included a desktop review of existing transport services, accessibility analysis, and possible on-demand transport options.
- An **engagement base report** documenting the insights and outcomes from the user surveys, targeted interviews with providers, and interactive workshops undertaken with key stakeholders.

Using the evidence base, insights from the project working group and Arup's team of experts, a roadmap has been developed for the EMP to consider and prioritise for future advocacy and consideration. This is outlined in **Section 6. Draft Roadmap**

Given the complexity and the wide array of community transport services and the emerging role of on-demand public transport in Australia we have sought to address two key questions in this report before progressing to opportunities and next steps:

- *What is the current and potential future role(s) of 'community transport' in the Eastern Region?*

- *What role should on-demand public transport play, and whether community transport providers could provide this type of service?*

Next Steps..

The EMP has an opportunity to leverage existing on-road public transport resources, mobility subsidy schemes (e.g. Multi Purpose Taxi Program) and to re-define the roles and responsibilities around community transport service provision to enhance accessibility throughout the region.

Key insights and opportunities documented within this report outline tangible actions for stakeholders to consider. This includes several "quick wins" that could be implemented with high positive impacts and low costs. This study has highlighted the significant benefits that could be achieved through the **streamlining and coordination of resources** for/between community service providers; with a broad array of providers, platforms, processes and systems there are considerable inefficiencies having separate systems for each provider. In addressing these inefficiencies, it will also be fundamental to **find sustainable funding streams** for community transport providers.

Beyond funding and better coordination, it is suggested that **a lack of recognition and definition on the role community transport plays within an integrated transport network** will remain a major roadblock to realising future opportunities. It is acknowledged there is a suite of strong, trusted and successful community transport providers within the EMP Region (including local government services), however with lack of agreed definition and recognition across all three levels of government complexities have arisen including an unequal service offerings across the region and more broadly the State. Given the importance of the service provided for the most vulnerable in the community and the complexities involved there is a real need to bring parties together through a co-design process to gain agreement and momentum on the future role of community transport provision.

We know social isolation is increasing in the EMP region, causing prolonged disengagement, health implications and impacts of people's quality of life. It will require a **strong commitment and collective ambition from EMP stakeholders to plan and agree sustainable plans for change.** This will not only benefit the region's most vulnerable but bring value to the entire community through improved engagement and awareness.

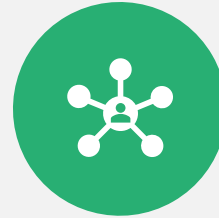# Key insights

Opportunity areas

Varied user requirements and abilities means there is no **"one size fits all"** public transport solution

Societal shifts, growing public transport gaps and increased expectations are likely leading to declines in **bus patronage**

Issues with **funding and recognition** of community transport inhibits use and sees inconsistent services throughout the region

Local Government involvement is important to **increasing trust** in community transport services and providers

Streamline community transport resources and improve coordination of services

Taking a Mobility as a Service approach through **stronger integration** of services and technology

Engage and co-create an agreed **integrated transport plan** for the EMP Region

Greater awareness of existing services and travel options is needed through easily **accessible information - to increase uptake** of public and community transport services

Technology is enabling efficiencies in processes but could **marginalise access** for vulnerable user groups

Better recognition that good local transport options underpin socially engaged communities, driving **independence and empowerment**

Ensuring **affordable and timely access** to services and programs is essential to decreasing social isolation in the community

Engage with the community to improve **awareness** and **uptake** of existing services

The time is right for **testing, and piloting** new service models

Aligning stakeholders, and setting in place **governance** around the **provision of community transport**

1. Setting the Scene

- Project drivers

- Engagement aims

- Context

- Existing service offerings

- Transport service offering

- Existing systems

ARUP

Project drivers

Engagement aim

At the commencement of this engagement, the project group defined five key project drivers to ensure alignment with strategic ambition of the Eastern Metropolitan Partnership and key stakeholders throughout.

While the project findings and strategic narratives have evolved through research and engagement, these drivers remain fundamental and have helped shape the report approach to ensure collective value and impact, while providing a point of reflection for key stakeholders.

Focus on addressing social isolation through targeted transport interventions , this engagement sought to **e**ngage a range of local providers and users to ensure a breadth of understanding of local access and pain points. This engagement aims to understand the role of community transport providers in the broader transport system and explore how we can influence back into department and wider region to create impact.

Our two guiding research questions:

Evidence and Insights
- What is the evidence telling us for the challenges facing the Eastern Region?
- What are the existing parameters of the transport system in the Eastern Region?

Optimising and Under-Utilisation
- What existing systems or resources can we optimise in the region?
- What new levers can be utilised for future opportunities and success?

Influence and Learnings
- Where can we create feasible change and influence to address social isolation?
- What opportunities exist or can be co-created to create change in the region?

Users and Community
- What are the key user needs and gaps in existing service?
- Where is the current system failing for users and stakeholders?

Role of Government
- What political parameters is the Eastern Region facing?
- What is the current and potential future role of government?

What is the **current and potential future role(s)** of **'community transport'** in the Eastern Region?

What role should **on-demand public transport** play, and whether **community transport providers** could provide this type of service?

Context

Melbourne's Eastern Region

Melbourne's Eastern Region encompasses a vast area of the Metropolitan Melbourne, the region fringing on green wedge surrounds contains six local government areas and within these a mosaic of unique suburbs and community highlighted in Figure 1. Each local area is home to a diverse array of residents, workers, visitors and therefore varying local needs and infrastructure to support livelihoods and mobility throughout the region and beyond. Home to approximately 20% of Greater Metropolitan Melbourne's residential population across one of the largest geographical Victorian metropolitan areas, comes the complexities of regional system organisation and movement. Transportation is a key issue when servicing the broad area with an array of user needs and patronage patterns.

Eastern Metropolitan Partnership is the region's key advocacy body, helping represent the interests and ambitions of six local governments: Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges, alongside key stakeholders and bodies within the region. EMP helping coordinate and sponsor regional priorities, with a vision for: "**A region with strong connections between people, places, services and jobs, that addresses disadvantage**."
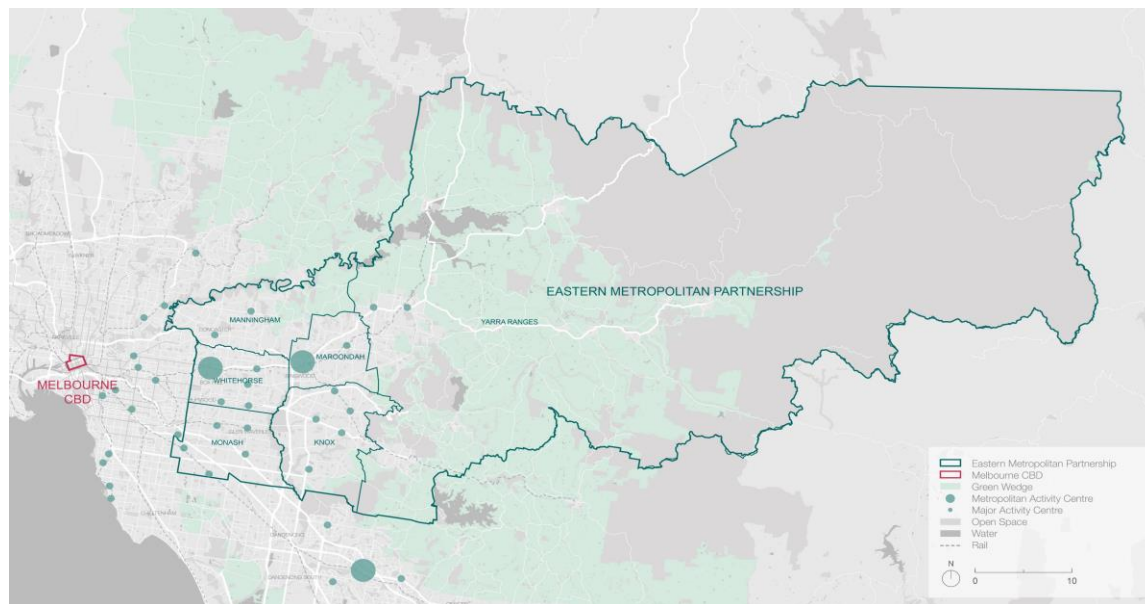
Figure 1: DEWLP (2018), Eastern Metropolitan Partnership Regional Overview

Policy and strategy

Comprehensive global research and reporting, best practice studies and detailed engagement surrounding transport and accessibility has highlighted the importance of efficient, affordable and inclusive transport systems, to keep residents engaged and active in their local communities. Inclusive transport systems are also central to sustain city economies and productivity.

Transport plays a crucial function in decreasing loneliness and social isolation. Promoting access to community engagement and socialisation subsequently reduces the risk of mental and physical health adversities; highlighting the direct benefits transportation has on users and local services. As highlighted in the 2020 report by the Commissioner for Senior Victoria's, *Aging Well in a Changing World*, users require accessible mobility options, that encorportate safety, security in service and supportive infrastructure, to be able to access to local services, support, socialisation, health, better wellbeing and independence.

Victorian planning and transport strategies strongly emphasises the need for Victorians to safely access their local areas to meet everyday needs, alongside increased health benefits. Plan Melbourne acknowledging *"Creating accessible, safe and attractive local areas where people can access most of their everyday needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or local public transport trip, will make Melbourne healthier and more inclusive."* Furthermore, the Victorian Transport Integration Act highlights that "The transport system should provide a means by which persons can access social and economic opportunities to support individual and community wellbeing".

On a local level, bus network reviews, aging well strategies and integrated transport plans highlight the need to reduce car dependency and increase shared delivery modes through public and private infrastructure. Particularly, in the Eastern Region where car ownership is prominent and direct public transport options limited. Recognising the strong role community transport can play in empowering vulnerable community members and forming a unique function in the holistic transport network.

Globally we also see the strategic importance of equitable access and transport provision through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) framework. Particuallry within goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) which states that cities should ensure access to safe and affordable transport, this should be planned, managed and improved in a participatory and inclusive manner.

Existing service offerings

The Eastern Metropolitan region of Melbourne is serviced by a comprehensive metropolitan bus system, alongside four metropolitan train lines, several strategic cycling corridors and a large spanning road network. The tram network is less prominent in the Eastern Region's public transport network in comparison to other areas of Greater Melbourne, the City Whitehorse is the only LGA to be apart of the Melbourne tram network with a limited provision on the inner edge of the municipality.

Bus network

There is a complex bus network in the Eastern Suburbs which follow the major arterial roads alongside a broad neighbourhood provision, shown in Figure 2. There is approximately 75 active public bus services spanning across the region, however towards the east of the region (Knox, Maroondah and the Yarra Ranges) the bus network becomes sparse and indirect, coinciding with decreasing urban density and urban fringe location; providing less efficient public transport options for commuters. According to a study done by Infrastructure Victoria, 40% of the bus routes are underperforming, against the international benchmark of 20 passengers boarding per service hour. The decline in bus patronage is costly and resource intensive to the public transport system.

Journey preferences

Car ownership is prevalent in the Eastern Region, demonstrated with most Eastern Region residents driving to work everyday (68.7%) (2016, ABS Census). Only 12.7% of residents identified taking public transport, of which only 2.7% were frequent bus riders and 10% took the train. This may be a result of the sparse and infrequent bus network and limited public transport provision throughout the region; which would be likely exacerbated by increased on-demand and ride share options for commuters saving time and creating more efficient point to point journeys.

The Eastern Metropolitan region, is also serviced by an array of private on-demand companies including taxi's and rideshare services such as Uber. These increasingly competitive models place high expectations in service delivery and commuter journeys.

Overall, the region is serviced by a range of public and private transport options, however it is clear the use of private vehicles is most popular and prominent in the region. Thus, the public bus network is not reaching its full potential with service and provisional gaps alongside inconsistent level of service and dependability deterring uptake.
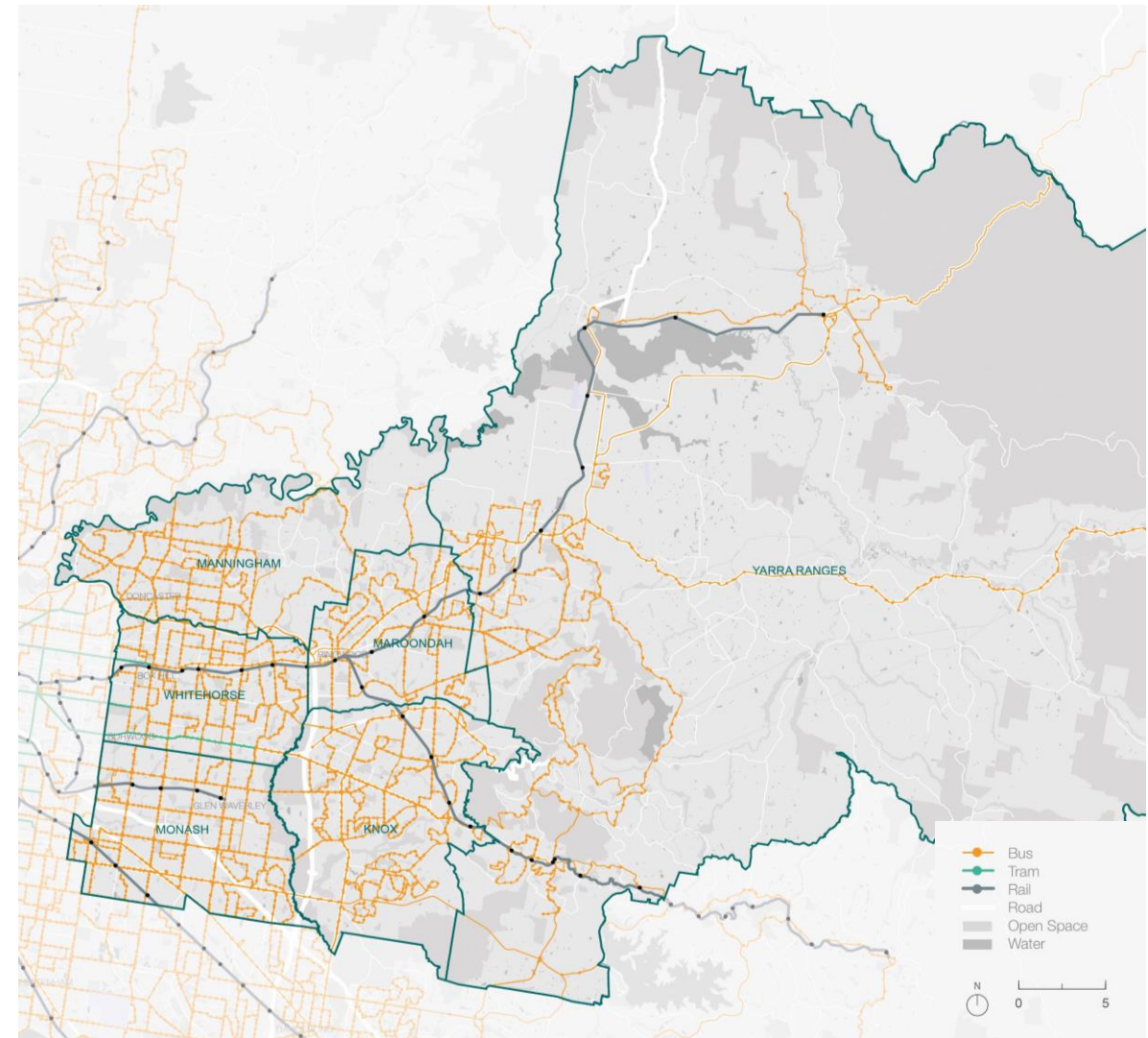

Figure 2: PTV (2018) Eastern Metropolitan Partnership Public Transport Network Overview

Existing service offerings

Community Transport vs On-demand Transport

It is important to differentiate between the two service offerings of Community Transport and On-demand Transport (includes On-demand public transport). Both operational models have different features and users, with point of overlap often causing some ambiguity in system definition and consistency in messaging.

Community transport provides flexible and accessible **community-led** solutions in response to unmet local transport needs, this provision often representing the only means of transport for many vulnerable and isolated people who may not be able to drive, to access other transport modes or require greater assistance in their journeys. Community transport aims to assist people who are in these situations and do not have another alternative options. Due to limited resourcing and funding, Community transport is often run by NFP or volunteer services with limited flexibility to invest into training, optimisation, fleet and workforce.

The ownership and management of the service is undertaken by local providers and often involves substantial effort from volunteers to maintain the service. The transport service can be generally on-demand or provide fixed routes and/or fixed services. Community transport plays a crucial role in local engagement and mobility. Funding models such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) also offers some assistance to user costing. The NDIS will provide funding to accessible public transport options and community transport services. This is an example of State and Federal government understanding transport as a "derived demand". Users of transport are using the service no because of its direct benefits, but because they wish to access other services. This is shown by the governments effort fund where consumer demand is prevalent and moving away from 'block funding' and direct contracting to service providers where possible. As well as within policy all level of government have recognised transport investment as a catalyst for socio-economic growth and benefit.

On-demand transport describes how a transport service is provided, namely with temporally or spatially flexible routes rather than using a fixed route or timetable. As such, the service can be offered by public or private providers. Private on-demand models have a commercial focus, creating an on-demand service. It provides the passenger with flexibility around the route they take and the time they travel. Emerging on-demand public transport models may be more fixed in nature, they may service only specific routes or local areas, specified stops and have limited-service hours.

With public transport networks built in response to cater to peak hour demand, typically to employment, there is not a consistent provision to cater to all day needs. Gaps in access to various services of the region meaning local users have limited access to affordable and regular public transport journey outside peak scheduling.
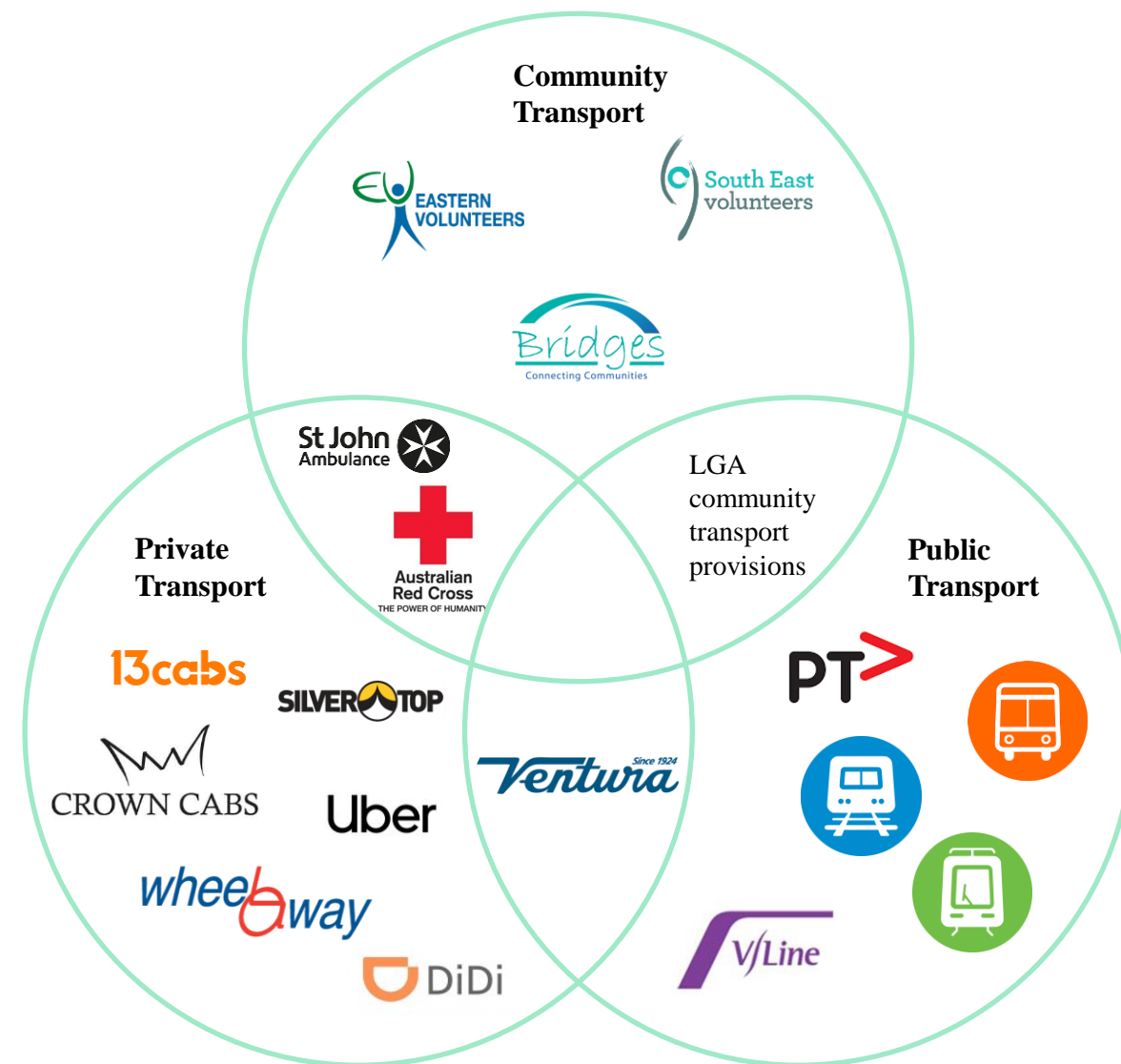

Figure 3: Transport Providers

Transport service offering

Local Public Transport service offering

Figure 4 from the Department of Transport outlines how Victoria's local public transport service sits within the context of the broader transport system. It is important to recognise that Community Transport services are seen to sit within this greater umbrella of local public transport in Victoria, however are not funded by the DoT like the other three service provisions.
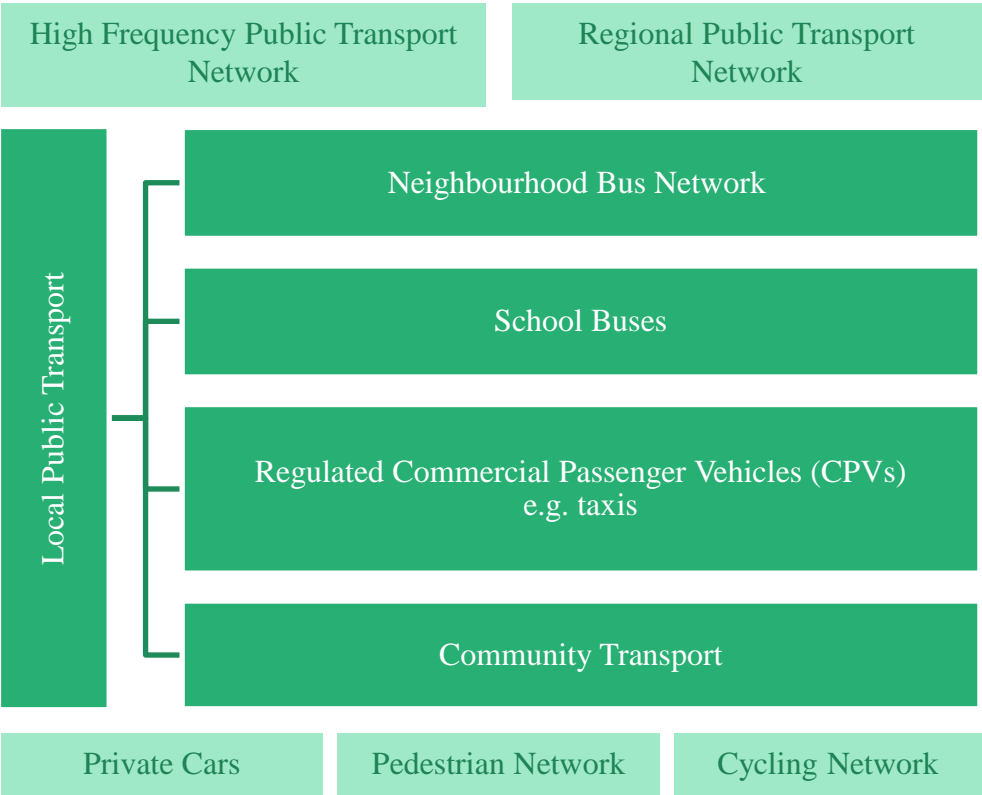
Transport service attributes

Figure 5 illustrates the attributes of each transport services i.e. frequency of service, ease of access and spatial coverage. Showing it in this way demonstrates the degree of accessibility and level of service provide by each mode. It is important to highlight the overlaps Community Transport has and where it sits in comparison with On-demand public transport.

Figure 4: Local transport system overview
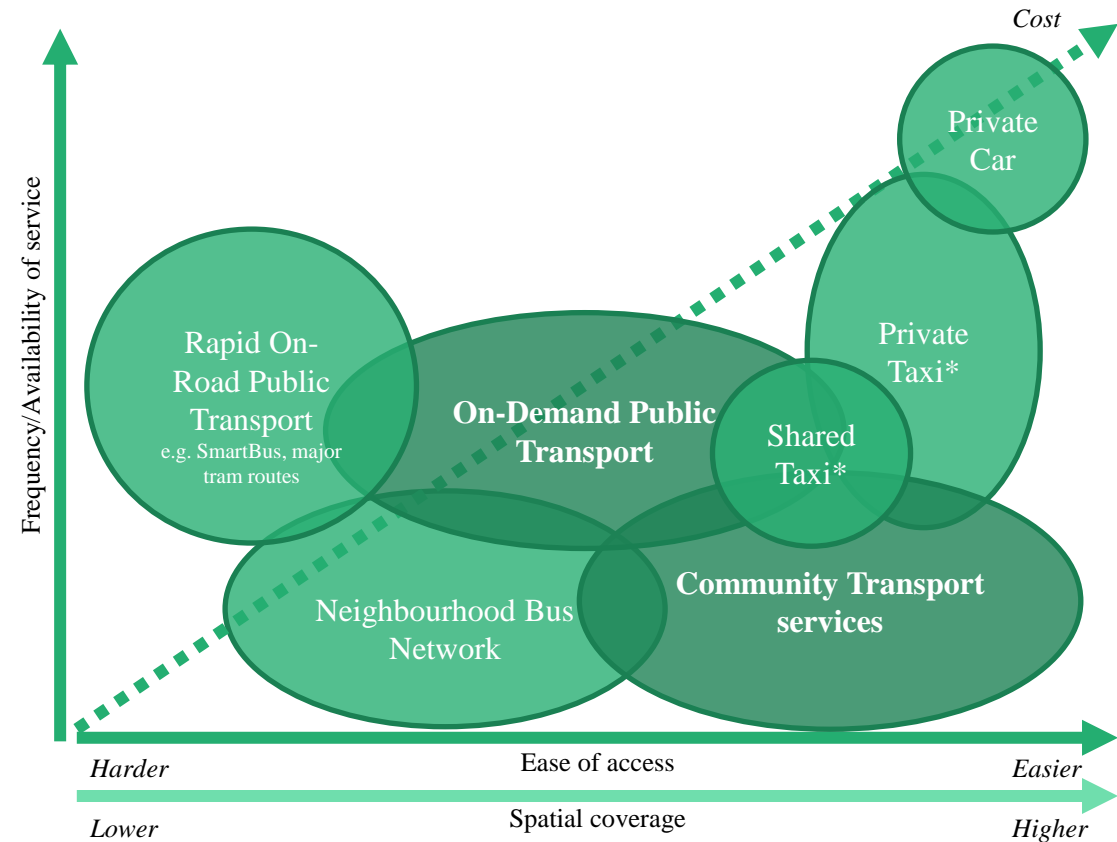
Figure 5: Transport service overview

*includes e-hail and ride-share service

Existing systems

Figure 6 compares the mobility and accessibility service offering for community transport, on-demand transport (both public transport and taxis) and regular public transport. It is highlighted this is a general diagram for illustrative purposes – service offering will be unique to their local context.

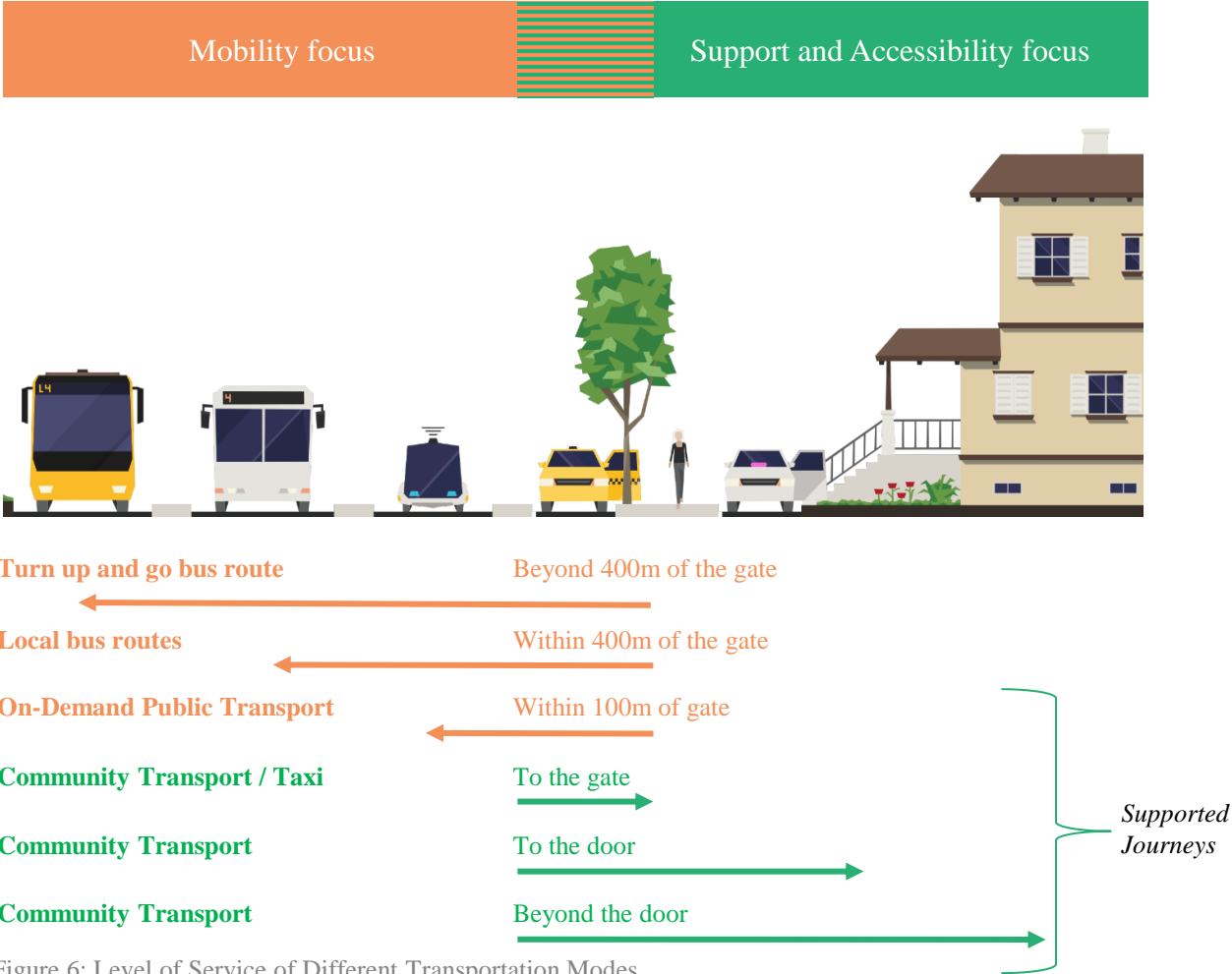## Service offering mobility vs accessibility

Figure 6: Level of Service of Different Transportation Modes

Figure 7 below highlights the different features of Public Transport and Community Transport provision in Melbourne's East, clearly demonstrating the difference in flexibility of the two service offerings.

Flexibility of service offering
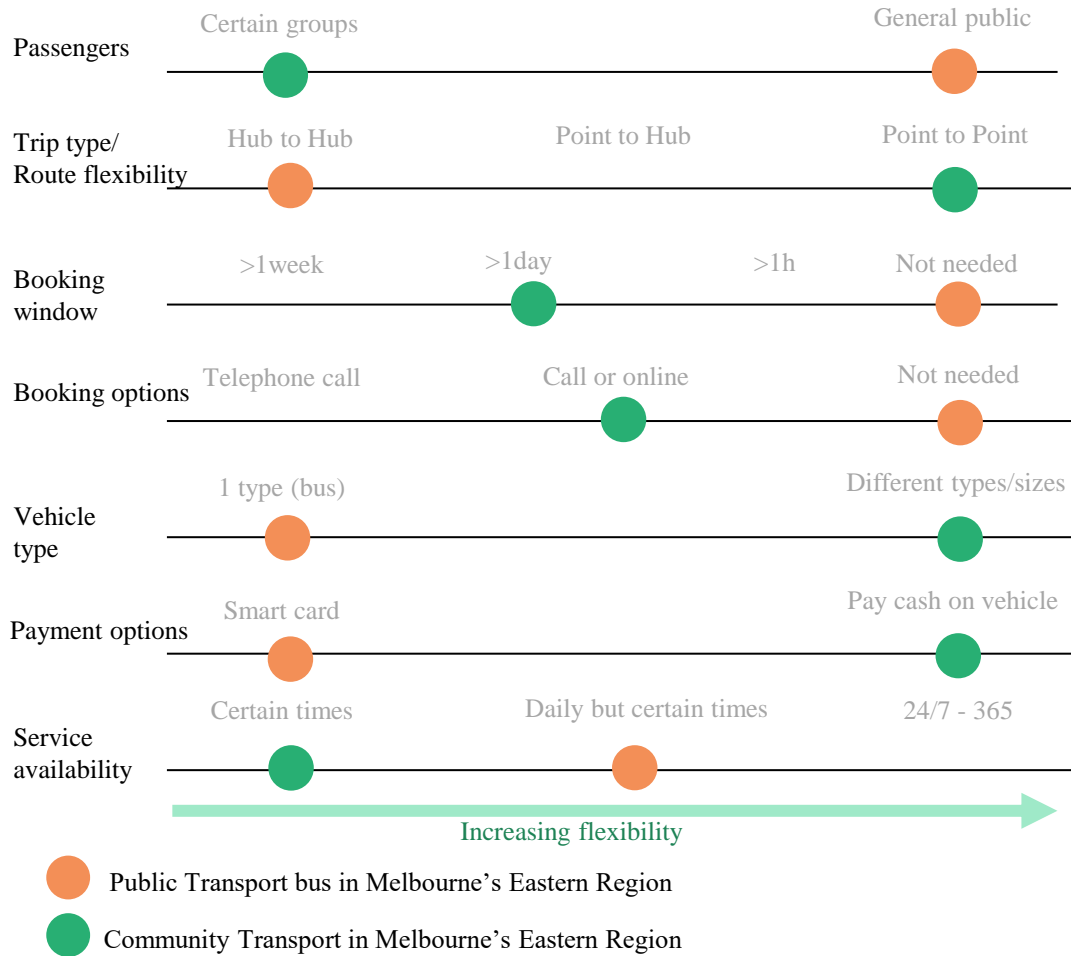
Figure 7: Differentiation of Public and Community Transport

Innovative Community Transport Solutions Report - Eastern Metropolitan Partnership

2. Challenges and Gaps

- COVID-19 implications
- Accessibility
- Digital
- Political

COVID-19 implications

Recent national and global events have highlighted environmental extremities which can not only shift, but greatly hinder accessibility and "business as usual" systems in communities. COVID-19 demonstrating a rapid yet prolonged shift in transport system requirements.

- At the height of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, regular commuters deserted public transport services around the country due to health concerns alongside mandated restrictions in regions, with a large shift to working from home likely to continue post pandemic, decreasing overall service demand.

- Approximately 20% of normal capacity used public transport in Melbourne between April and July (Infrastructure Victoria, 2021). This drop in patronage poses questions of system viability and ongoing funding, in a time of changing behaviour towards human contact, distancing and movement.

- Throughout this time, there was an ongoing need for community access and mobility, even if trips were restricted in frequency and distance. Therefore, many commuters became more dependent on active transport such as riding and walking, alongside private vehicles, as drivers or passengers. Transport is a necessity to access goods and services, therefore this trend towards private or active modes marginalised already vulnerable groups, highlighting the need for community support and financial aid to assist in regular movement.

- A global trend towards direct and efficient transport, avoiding unnecessary touchpoints and contact will likely see the increase in "point to point" travel modes, in which a commuter has agency over direct pathways of travel.

- Figure 9 demonstrates the strong generational pattern that correlates with intention to use ride share, with over 80% indicated they do not intend to use ride share services (due to health concerns). This trend demonstrates the heightened risk of private vehicle use increase, causing congestion, pollution, social fragmentation and public transport network disengagement. In a time of global change, this challenge must be addressed and seen as an opportunity for change to mitigate long term network degrade.

Working from Home (WFH) during the height of COVID-19 in Victorian metropolitan areas
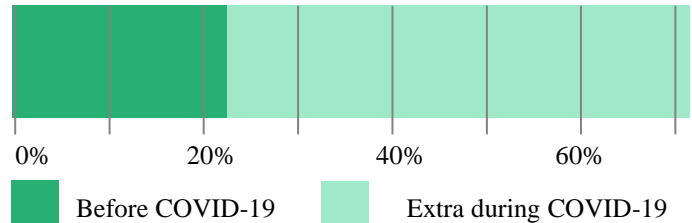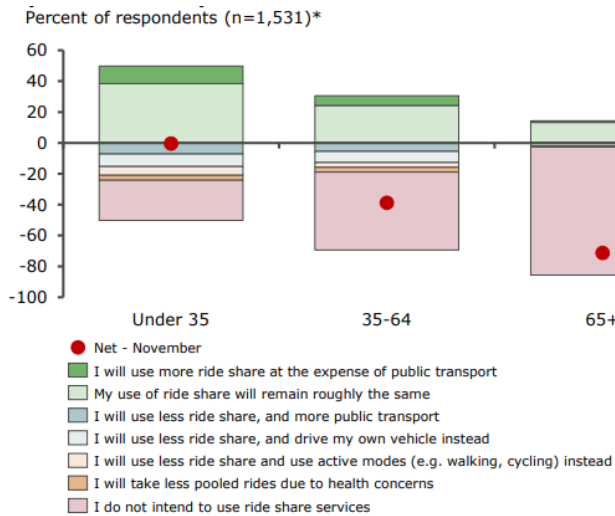

Figure 8: Australians want to work from home more post-COVID-19, 28 September 2020, University of Sydney

Intention to return to pre-COVID-19 use of ride share, by age cohort (November 2020)

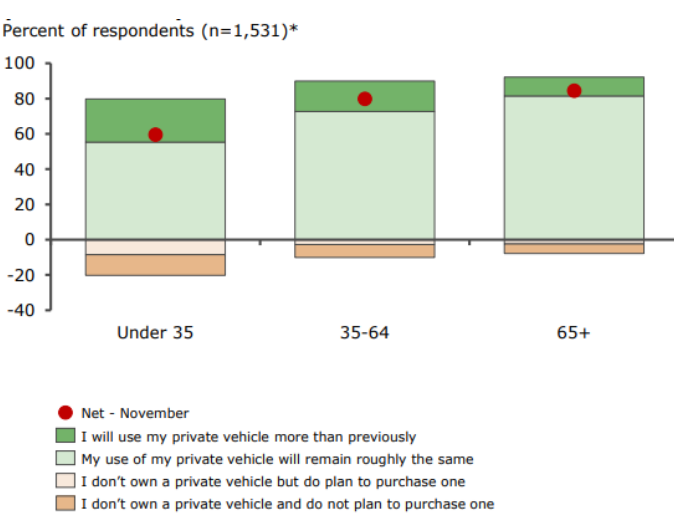**Intention to return to pre-COVID-19 use of private vehicle, by age cohort (November 2020)**

Figure 9: LEK consulting for Infrastructure Australia (Australian Government, 2020) COVID-19 travel intentions

Accessibility

Car dependency

- Car ownership in the Eastern Metropolitan region is among the highest in the State.

- 58% of households own two or more motor vehicles compared to 51% in Greater Melbourne (2016, ABS Census). In combination with most residents driving to employment everyday, this inherently shows there is a lack of confidence and trust within the public transport system for effective travel.

The Metropolitan Bus Service Reviews (2010) highlighted:

- Large portions of residential areas in Monash, Knox and Maroondah are bordered by arterial roads and lack permeable road networks suitable for efficient bus operations, resulting in a low percentage of households served by public transport.

- Local residents have expressed concerns at the lack of connections to key destinations not only inside their municipalities, but also outside of their LGAs to essential services and engagement e.g. to tertiary education

Aging population

Nationally, Australia is faced with an increased ageing population, this will place greater pressure on supportive resources and community infrastructure as this trend increases, as demonstrated in Figure 10.

- Currently 17% of the population in Melbourne's Eastern Region are aged 65 years or older (2016, ABS Census). Most senior residents prefer to 'age in place', with the desire to remain independent while still engaged in their local community (2020, Commissioner for Senior Victorians).

- Transport is strongly linked to the health and social wellbeing of older people as well as their independence. Transport which does not service the needs of seniors exacerbates the barriers to ageing well, affecting their level of care/services and heightens negative health outcomes holistically to users and community.

For more information on regional accessibility and socio-economic analysis, please **see Appendices A- Evidence Base**

Social isolation and loneliness

Increasing trends of lone person households, aging population, global events (natural disaster and COVID-19) and accessibility challenges can increase social isolation in communities. This is strongly associated with impacts on mental and physical health. Key factors contributing to social isolation include declining levels of social support and trust, intolerance of diversity, non-engagement with local community, and declining socioeconomic status. 15.8% of adults within the Eastern Metropolitan region experience High or Very High levels of social isolation, the Yarra Ranges being the LGA which experiences the highest rates at 18.4% (2014, Department of Health and Human Services).

The City of Monash recently published the *Monash Loneliness Framework 2020-2025* as a means to address existing challenges of loneliness in the LGA, as well as use it as part of their COVID-19 response plan. The document recognises the impact of physical distancing and stay at home orders during the pandemic has exacerbated the feeling of social isolation and loneliness among residents (Monash, 2020).

Eastern Melbourne experiences many network gaps across the region to a variety of health, community and commercial services. Older people need to have safe paths of travel from their home to the point of destination (Yarra Ranges Council, 2019). Through our stakeholder engagement, it became apparent connection to local shopping centres and community facilities provide more than just direct service to vulnerable groups. It provides a safe place to socialise, engage with community, as well as exercise. Facilities like these, hold greater social capital to vulnerable groups, demonstrating the need for accessibility beyond core service provision.
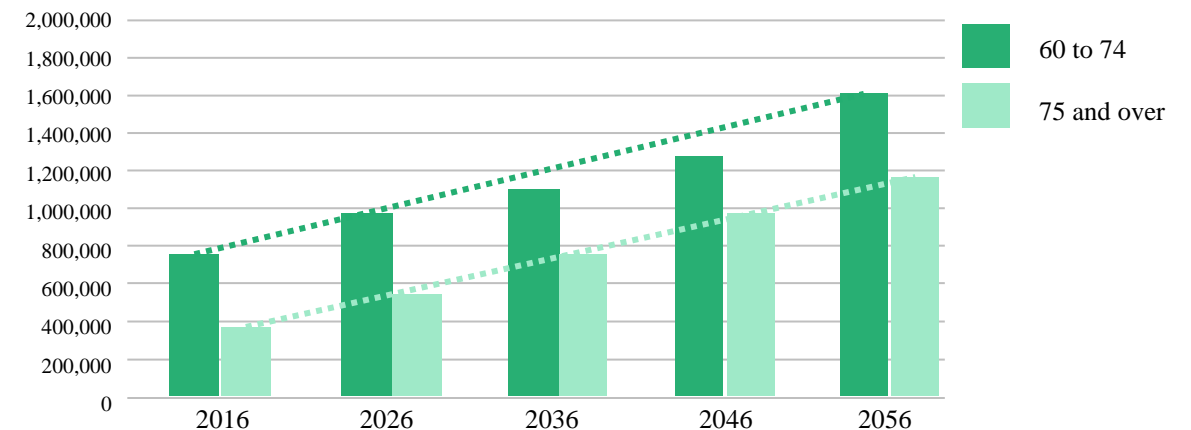

Figure 10: Victorian population aged over 60 – predicted growth 2016–2056, Source: State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2019). *Victoria in Future 2019.*

Accessibility

20 Minute Neighbourhood

The Eastern Region does not currently achieve the Victorian Goal of 20-minute neighbourhoods, a core feature of Melbourne's strategic ambitions of Plan Melbourne to ensure accessible and engaged communities (Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050, State Government of Victoria). Residents within Melbourne's Eastern Region are in many parts unable to 'live locally' and meet most of their daily need within a 20-minute walk or public transport trip from their home. Layering steep terrain in areas, sparse public transport provision and accessibility considerations in the Eastern Region increases difficulty in access to essential services such as employment, health services and community facilities, most of which are crucial for residents to access to maintain liveability and engagement locally.

Access to Employment

Overall, the level of access among Eastern Region residents is also relatively even within reasonable thresholds of travel and job accessibility. As expected, those LGA's and suburbs which sit towards the western end and close to Melbourne CBD have a slightly higher level of access with more employment opportunities in close proximity. However, this is not a significant discrepancy is the level of access. Despite this, most residents in all eastern LGAs travel outside of their municipality for work.

Access to Health Services

There is a lack of access to health services among all the Eastern Metropolitan Region LGA's. There are large pockets within the region where residents are unable to access any form of health services within a 20-minute public transport journey. This is a significant issue as some of the critical issues facing the Eastern Partnership areas are: aging population, increasing social isolation and rising mental health concerns. With a high proportion of residents requiring assistance there is a need to address this shortfall and facilitate wider regional access.

Access to Community Facilities

On initial accessibility analysis, there seems to be high level of access to community facilities across the region. However, among most of the LGA's community facilities are concentrated together in nodal areas and not evenly dispersed throughout the area. Thus, leaving some residents likely to be more socially isolated as urban density decreases and dwellings become sparser. This may have further consequences on the status of mental and physical health of residents, with use of these facilities often limited to required due to cumbersome access.

Network Gaps

The public transport network fails to connect residents to medical facilities, this being a critical service for local residents and in particular vulnerable user groups including the aging population, those socially isolated, and/or those living with a disability (see Figure 12 below). Gaps seem to exist within the public transport network which may contribute to a poorer level of medical care and cause health implications to Eastern Regions due to lack of access. For example, difficulties in accessing healthcare service will in turn restrict choice of appointment time and may increase waiting times, further marginalising a vulnerable population from essential services in their local communities.

These network gaps, are not only spatial (where stops/stations are positioned) but also scheduled, with provisional gaps and long wait times deterring users. The figures below highlights that PT services are not coordinated in a manner which is effective for user journeys throughout the region. User feedback also reinforcing long waiting times are often required if PT passengers need to change their service due to lack of regularity and provision of service, limiting timing and options, pushing users to consider other modes which are more dependable.
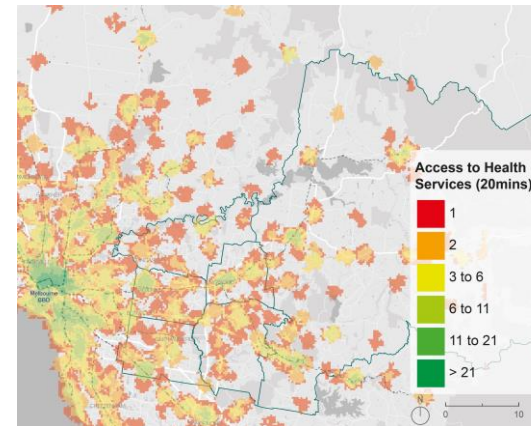

Figure 11: DWELP (2018), Access to health services within a 20 minute public transport journey
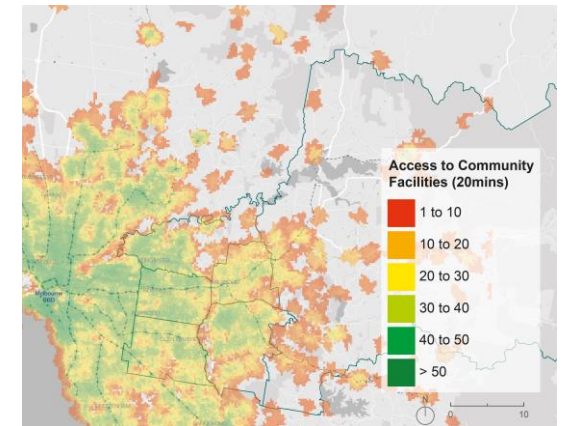

Figure 12: DEWLP (2018), Access to Community Facilities within a 20 minute public transport journey

Digital

Increased technology

Transport and technology are becoming intertwined through the use of smartphone apps, online booking systems, with increased digital platforms for access, use and funding such as Myki cards and journey planning applications. The continued evolution of technology allowing for "simplified" systems and increased efficiencies. However alongside this, users who have limited digital literacy, accessibility considerations or are unable to access appropriate infrastructure to support these digital functions, such as internet and smartphones, are being left behind.

Vulnerable members of community, including seniors' residents and those living with accessibility considerations, highlight concerns that they may not have the digital skills and are more comfortable with traditional methods of booking and scheduling. Trust in provision platforms and booking systems is essential to uptake, system change can deter use and disengage users. In our stakeholder interviews many participants prefer or require paper-based schedules, phone booking systems and cash fares to engage with transport providers.

Common feedback including; Myki cards were seen to be difficult and confusing, senior users recalling forgetting to 'tap off' and making a journey more expensive, not knowing if they have enough money on their cards, or how to use the provided top-up machines. Furthermore, using rideshare apps such as Uber can be difficult for vulnerable groups due to the online booking system. Several users expressed they do not feel comfortable with rideshare as they do not know the drivers, and the drivers do not know their key contacts in case an emergency was to happen.

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner released a report on *'Encouraging the digital participation of older Australians through mentoring'* (2019). The main barriers identified hindering older Australians to gain better digital skill have been identified as: a lack of time, patience, confidence and mobility/dexterity. As well as the cost of digital devices and the ability to access the internet. Also noted in the study was that if Australians aged 70+ improve their internet skills it will make them more confident and independent, resulting in more social interaction and less social isolation, increasing connectivity and access to information.

Locally in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, we see proactive initiatives seeking to address these digital challenges. For example, Monash City Council providing positive aging programs, offering free of low-cost activities for older adults in the region. Within this classes and skill sessions such as "Using your smartphone" to help instil confidence and enhance skills in elderly user groups, empowering them to use new technology and applications for transport and community service. Furthermore promoting socialisation and enhanced engagement through accessible programmes. (City of Monash, 2020, PALS)

Barriers to helping older Australians learn internet skills

Amongst Mentors (those teaching)

Lack of time
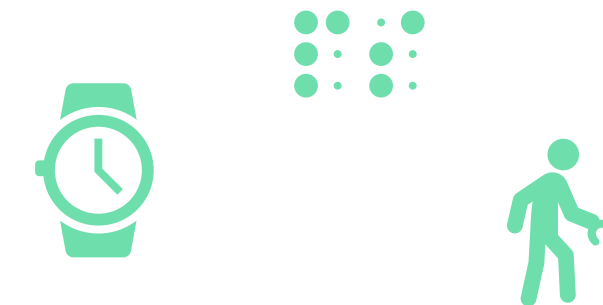Teaching internet skills takes more time than I have available

Patience
It's hard to be patient when they are slow or disinterested

Confidence
I'm not confident that I know how to teach them internet skills

Patience
They live too far away and I need to see them regularly to teach them

Amongst Mentees (those learning)

Don't understand benefits
They don't see any benefit to having internet skills

Physical barriers
They can't remember, have poor hearing, eyesight or dexterity

Apathy, disinterest
They are set in their ways, they don't want to learn new things

Fear of failure
They fear trying and failing

Cost
They can't afford to buy a computer or pay for the internet

Fear of being scammed
They are worried about being tricked or scammed online

Impatient
They get frustrated if they don't understand and want to give up

Figure 13 : Commissioner of the eSafety Office (2019) Summary of barriers to helping older Australians learn digital skills, from Encouraging the digital participation of older Australians through mentoring

Political

Governance and Responsibilities

Given the nature of the Community Transport, with a core focus on providing support to people to enable them to travel, its provision and governance can fall into a grey area, due to it's dual consideration as a carer service and as a transport service. The Victorian system for community accessibility and transport provision has been ambiguous in jurisdiction, suffering from historical disadvantage of less central organisational ownership and complex funding pathways, differing from the more direct authority of ownership seen in other Australian states.

User funding and access

Changes to the Home and Community Care (HACC) funded services, and introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2016, additional individual support packages has created some confusion regarding the eligibility and access to transport funding to vulnerable user groups. Furthermore, transport concession fares and programs such as the Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) has added to the ambiguity between accessible community transport modes and mobility assistance when operated in different siloes or private and public ownership.

Departments and organisation

DHHS (the Department of Health and Human Services) delivers policies, programs and services that support and enhance the health and wellbeing of all Victorians. This funding is allocated to regional and local levels home and community care programs, which can be used as deemed fit by local areas to deliver services to support community engagement and activity. This may include community transport programs and inclusive of broader strategies related to aging population, community programs, increased local service and amenity provision. This creates some ambiguity and occasional lack of use due to unclear requirements and allocation throughout communities.

DoT (Department of Transport) is responsible for coordinating Victoria's growing transport system and planning for it's future inclusive of community transport provision. Recently, DoT launched trials such as the Flexi-ride service in Rowville have seen these lines begin to blur and widen inclusion of traditional public transport portfolio.

Local provision

The Eastern Metropolitan Region of Metropolitan Melbourne is inclusive of the six Local Government Areas (LGAs) as outlined in Figure 14. Political frameworks within the Eastern LGAs are often determined at a higher level (State or Federal), this often includes sector funding and allocation of budgets to key local areas dependent on program uptake and advocated requirements. Locally within councils, program administration and delivery are assessed on a case-by-case basis to suit of requirements and ambitions, some facilitating unique programs and community support, such as community transport options.
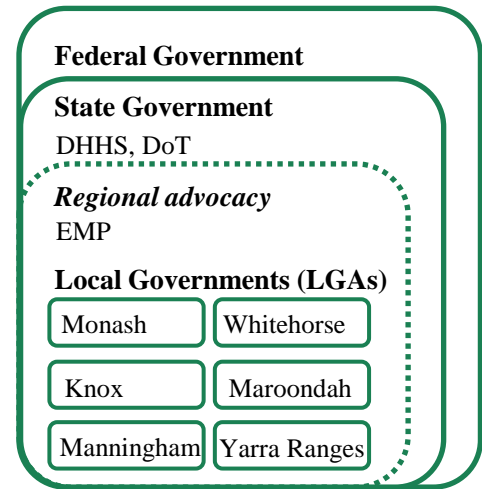

Federal Government

State Government
DHHS, DoT

Regional advocacy
EMP

Local Governments (LGAs)

Monash	Whitehorse
Knox	Maroondah
Manningham	Yarra Ranges

Figure 14: Levels of governance

Public and Private priorities

There is a spectrum of public and private providers within the Eastern Region that deliver community transport and associated programs, some provision though local government authorities and others entirely independent in delivery. Many are heavily dependent on volunteers, due to lack of funding placing a high level of pressure on operating models and viability. Private ride share models and taxi companies within the on-demand market are heavily aligned with the need to upkeep commercial agendas in an increasingly competitive transport delivery space, therefore differing service delivery capabilities from high and medium care community transport models.

Ownership

Due to these range of stakeholders and models involved currently in the on-demand provision, there is lack of clear categorisation and ownership to form overall structure, inhibiting a cohesive response and inclusive community models in the region. Funding allocation, departmental ownership, user eligibility and delivery models are unclear in Victoria, placing pressure on local funding and provision causing a mosaiced delivery approach.

3. User Requirements

- Personas

- Value proposition

- Service needs

ARUP

Personas

The following personas were created to demonstrate the diverse users of local transport within Melbourne's Eastern Region, their transit patterns, narratives and requirements.

They have been generated through evidence obtained through research, surveys and interviews to date. While fictional names and details have been used to protect anonymity of stakeholders and local users engaged, anecdotes and character dimensions are reflective of lived local experience in the Eastern Region.

For more information on stakeholder engagement and user analysis please **see Appendices B- Engagement Base**

PROFILE

Wei
Transport user
Independent, active, retired

- Male, 66 yo
- Retired
- Without a disability and can easily access a car
- Myki Concession fare user

Yvonne
Transport user
Mobility needs, semi-retired

- Female , 79 yo
- At home small business
- Living with disability that would need assistance to travel

Emma
Transport user
Health needs, unemployed

- Female, 28 yo
- Currently out of work
- Due to health issues cannot drive
- Myki Concession fare user

Rick
Transport operator
Part time volunteer

- Male, 59 yo
- Volunteer bus driver
- Part time rideshare driver
- Drives own car as required

Marie
Transport Coordinator
Private Community Transport organisation,

- Female, 45 yo
- Works fulltime for private Community transport provider

TRAVEL HABITS

Wei's primary mode of transport is his car for local errands. He often uses private taxis or airport transfer services recommended by friends for longer or health related journeys. He sometimes takes public transport however he finds the travel times and multiple transfers unreasonable therefore avoids its. Wei is independent but needs help time to time.

Yvonne's transport is provided by local friends or community providers due to her accessibility needs. She often uses Eastern Volunteers Community Transport as a means of going to and from appointments, shopping and socialising. She rarely uses public transport. She enjoys outings but conscious this takes sufficient planning.

Emma's primary mode of transport is Public Transport and community transport through Bridges Connecting Communities for medical appointments. She uses public transport for errands; however, due to her health issues, finds the journey difficult and tiring. She has limited social interaction, being primarily in her own company at home.

Rick works part time as a volunteer driver for a local community transport provider. He typically works a few days a week but has recently taken up ride share job with uber. This allows him to take casual on-demand jobs to suit his schedule in time he is available. He values the relationships he makes with locals through his driving in the region.

Maria coordinates a major private community transport provider within the Eastern Region. She is aware of the confusion between providers and stakeholders in transport provision and access. She would love to see a regional system approach that is more accessible and efficient. She is open to working more closely with public and private providers.

QUOTES

"I would get that (local community transport) if there was one in my area but I don't think there is"

"Touching myki on and off, I forget and costs more... I have seen people struggle to get off in time, it is too busy, won't make the stop"

"Once I trust the driver I will keep using... even if more expensive I know they will do a good job... they won't leave without me"

"I wouldn't know how to order one (uber), I just call, I don't know how to use the apps and online things "

"I am trying to get NDIS at the moment but that is not going well... (public transport) is one of my only options... I would prefer to drive but my options are limited with my condition"

"Changing bus after a long day my brain doesn't work, you have to pay attention, can be tiring"

"We know which client has a carer and we carry that person at no cost."

"We don't just drive, they note if a client is unwell and advise staff for follow up."

"The trust is important, without it many people wouldn't leave the house"

"We need more volunteers, more funding, more staff... efficient software needed for broader provision"

"We rely on volunteer drivers and therefore cannot commit to 'on-demand' transport requests."

"Many people are unaware of the services they can access in the area"

Value proposition

The following user requirements using a value proposition framework to understand different user needs and challenges when travelling by local transport systems in the Eastern Region. These personas were based on user profiles and travel habits generated through lived experience.

The following section outlines Tasks (used needs), Gains (user wants) and Pains (user challenges)

- What does this local user need to achieve or do? (**Tasks**)
- What would the user like in their experience? What would make their travel good? (**Gains**)
- What is a pain point/ challenge for the user? What would create a negative experience? (**Pains**)

Wei	Yvonne	Emma	Rick	Marie
Transport user Independent, active, retired, CALD	**Transport user** Mobility needs, semi-retired	**Transport user** Health needs, unemployed	**Transport operator** Part time volunteer	**Transport Coordinator** Private community transport organisation,

TASKS

Wei	Yvonne	Emma	Rick	Marie
• Travel to local supermarket and cafes for errands and socialisation • Travel to medical appointments, occasional assisted care required • Travel to local school to pick up grand children and drop home • Travel to local community activities • Walking to keep active and mobile	• Assisted travel to supermarket and medical appointment • Assisted travel to social meetings and running errands • Group travel to local activities and community group events • Public transport if travelling regionally by rail or bus	• Travel to local shopping centre when required for groceries and errands • Weekly assisted travel to medical appointments • Ability to call and change bookings • Access to health care providers and disability support guidance	• Car access • Part time volunteer driving for local community transport provider • On-demand driving for Uber in off time available • Maintaining work / life balance • Income stream	• Accessible vehicles • Access to volunteer staff • Sufficient fleet provision for region • Coordinated booking and dispatch system to operate • Communication with users in need • Visibility of service across region

GAINS

Wei	Yvonne	Emma	Rick	Marie
• **Being informed** of local service offerings and what is accessible • Information that is **easily accessible** in other languages • Being able to **book service online** on smartphone and **receive updates** • Speaking to **new people**, learning stories and making connections	• Travel options arriving **on time** • Having a community transport **vehicle to herself** when attending important appointments • **Knowing the provider driver** • Being able to fit walker and any baggage easily in provider vehicle • Feeling **comfortable and secure**	• **Limited interactions** with people • **Efficient transport** journeys • Limited or **no wait time** • **Drivers being aware** of Emma's health needs without having to discuss on each journey • Access to **real-time and centralised information** about resources	• **Centralised information** for bookings and transport routes • Being **able to plan ahead** of time • Consistent work schedule • Ability to **take on extra work** as needed or desired • Maintaining **social interaction** with local commuters and providers	• **Centralised information** for bookings and transport routes • Being **able to plan ahead** of time • Consistent work schedule for drivers • Regional **support** • **Increased advocacy** for funding from government • Greater user assistance available

PAINS

Wei	Yvonne	Emma	Rick	Marie
• **Language** barrier • Scheduling and flexibility • Sense of **safety** during journey • Lack of **provider knowledge** • Risk of losing licence with vision difficulties	• **Physical accessibility**, requiring mobility assistance • Scheduling and flexibility • Low **technological proficiency** • Unable to **use online booking** • Feeling "a burden" on others	• **Cost** of transport • **Fatigue** (physical and social) • Access to **funding,** in process • **Confusion** of system • Inability to work • Lack of independence • **Social isolation** and mental health	• Balancing work schedules • **Income** stream • Lack of foresight on-demand • **Vehicle issues** and upkeep • Being unable to meet all passenger requirements and provision gaps • **Commercial pressures**	• **Funding** gaps • **Resourcing** gaps arising • Lack of **consistent staff** (volunteer) • Lack of information around **stakeholder role and governance** • **Investment** into creation and delivery of new **training and resources**

Service needs

By better understanding service needs we can deliver more inclusive and sustainable transport in the Eastern Region. Transport users need to choose to engage with the current and future transport provision available in the Eastern Region instead of resorting to private vehicle use for travel needs, therefore services must meet and exceed customers needs to engage and retain usage, ensuring high quality provision that encourages continued engagement.

The five service pillars (to the right) have been created to reflect common user needs discovered through engagement and feedback received from the Eastern Region community. The pillars set a foundation in which to plan and deliver transport services for the community. Aligning user needs in the region, for commuters, operators and providers to ensure sustainable models providing for transport users and organisations. These common touchpoints reflecting on the critical requirements for successful design and delivery, both of existing and foreseeable systems.

Feedback from existing transport users in Melbourne's Eastern Region

"It is about empowering users... giving control of their journeys and options they have to move around... give independence"

"Transport service is targeted at vulnerable people... many like to be helped by a smaller group of familiar drivers that they trust"

"I have always felt comfortable with my provider, they do a good job and make sure I get where I need to be... they will wait if they need to"

"Once I trust the driver I will keep using... even if more expensive I know they will do a good job... they won't leave without me"

"Some of my friends don't speak English, they don't get the bus or train because it is too difficult to navigate... migrants need more help "

Dependable

Transport should arrive and depart as scheduled. Information is timely, accessible, reliable and accurate for all journey types.

Measures of success
Frequency of service, wait times, information updates, congestion en-route,

Trust

Transport is safe for all users and operators. There is respect and good behaviour amongst staff and commuters with ongoing relationships formed.

Measures of success
Safety of service, help point provision, customer satisfaction

Value

Transport is affordable, the price is worth the perceived value received by the user and community overall.

Measures of success
Affordability, direct cost, revenue per vehicle/driver, economic efficiency

Empowerment

Transport gives users the ability and confidence to engage with their local networks, services, amenities and social engagements seamlessly. Also empower to engage in design of these services.

Measures of success
Community uptake, user retention, equity of service, technological adaption

Adaptable

Transport gives users agency over their travel schedules and changes, flexibility allowing for change and on the go decision making with clear information and help points.

Measures of success
Flexible booking systems, route breadth, level of service

4. Insights and Evidence

- Insights summary

- Insights

  Evidence, supporting findings, provocations

ARUP

Insights

The following seven insights seek to encompass engagement and research into key takeaways for the Eastern Region. These insights amalgamate findings from accessibility analysis, stakeholder interviews, user research and best practice literature to summarise engagement findings into core themes for future consideration, informing opportunities and pathways.
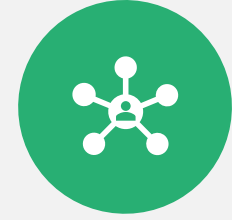
Varied user requirements and abilities means there is no **"one size fits all"** public transport solution

Societal shifts, growing public transport gaps and increased expectations are likely leading to declines in **bus patronage**

Issues with **funding and recognition** of community transport inhibits use and sees inconsistent services throughout the region

Local Government involvement is important to **increasing trust** in community transport services and providers

Greater awareness of existing services and travel options is needed through easily **accessible information - to increase uptake** of public and community transport services

Technology is enabling efficiencies in processes but could **marginalise access** for vulnerable user groups

Better recognition that good local transport options underpin socially engaged communities, driving **independence and empowerment**

Ensuring **affordable and timely access** to services and programs is essential to decreasing social isolation in the community

Varied user requirements and abilities means there is no "one size fits all" public transport solution

The range of transport options within the Eastern Region, each provide different levels of care and provision to meet local needs and access gaps in the community. Community transport has a unique role to service and empower vulnerable user groups in the region; however this does not always align with the agendas of public, commercial and private models who need to generate revenue to meet business needs and sustain systems. Many do not have the capacity to deliver extra levels of care in their business models as existing volunteer and non-for-profit organisations currently do.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• An array of private and public options including a large number of community transport providers operate in silo in specific areas of the Eastern Region responding to network gaps	• Varying abilities, journey requirements and travel preferences requiring a spectrum of transport providers and services to service diverse needs of users.	• Public and private providers unaligned in resources and efficiencies due to area specific provision and individual operational approaches in transit operations.

Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• The public network struggles with uptake (especially bus) in the region, indirect routes and limited provision lacking access to some vulnerable user groups.	• Community transport providers typically operate to council specific areas, lacking regional oversight and service provision	• Private commercial providers currently offering the most accessible point to point transfers for many, however costly to users and not accessible to all vulnerable groups	• A need for a more flexible and holistic system that can consolidate siloed operations into a consistent regional format • Consolidation of operations could save resources

Range of various transport providers in the Eastern Metropolitan Region

Public and Local Government Community Transport Service Providers	Private Transport Service Providers	Taxi companies operating in Melbourne's East/Car Hire
Knox Council Community Transport and Shopping Bus	Eastern Volunteers/Eastern Transport Register	Melbourne Eastern Taxis
Manningham Aged Assisted transport service	South East Volunteers	Silver Top Taxis
City of Whitehorse Community Transport	Bridges Connecting Communities	13 Cabs
Yarra Ranges Community Bus Services	The St John Ambulance Community Transport Service	Crown Taxis
Monash Community Transport	Red Cross Patient Transport Service	Wheelaway Disability vehicle hire
Public and Local Government Community Transport Service Providers	Private Transport Service Providers	Taxi companies operating in Melbourne's East/Car Hire

Figure 15: Existing providers within EMR

What we heard

> *"I cannot use local public transport because of my disability"*

> *"We need more, consistent and reliable transport in areas of ageing populations"*

> *"More frequent and direct transport. Transport via secondary streets is needed"*

> *"More coordinated buses and trains, rather than hopping on and off 3-4 different times to reach a destination… a car could get to in 15 minutes"*

Provocations

• Where can users go to understand which transport system/provider best meets their needs?

• How do we coordinate resources for providers and operators for more efficient delivery?

• Could the Eastern Region have wider spanning community transport services?

• How can we support users to better understand and access P2P travel in the absence of centralisation?

Societal shifts, growing public transport gaps and increased expectations are likely leading to declines in bus patronage

COVID-19 implications, commuter behaviour change, and increased car dependency are increasing the risk of on-road congestion and public transport disengagement, with many commuters now choosing private vehicle modes for transit for ease of access, safety and efficiency. Coupled with historical bus patronage decline with introduction of ride share e.g. Uber, we are seeing disengagement with public transport systems, costing time, money and resources to departments who must meet a minimum level of service across the region despite commuter trends.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• Disengagement with the public network due to recent global events, behaviour change and increase in service expectations. • Vehicle dependency and higher congestion on roads.	• Inefficient public networks and lack of visibility of other providers encouraging individual car use or taxis service to reach destination efficiently	• Bus network underutilised and costly to providers • Inconsistent commuter patronage for providers, hindering viability and fuelling network gaps

Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• Over 4533 bus stops in the region, costing an estimated over $130 million being significantly underutilised	• Private vehicles preference for community transport increasing vehicles on road and demand on small fleet provision	• Increase in uptake of on-demand ride share models such as Uber due to cost and availability in region • User desire for point to point	• Opportunity for first / last mile provision to help bridge gaps in network • Future transport provision should work alongside public systems

Uber was launched in Victoria (October 2012)

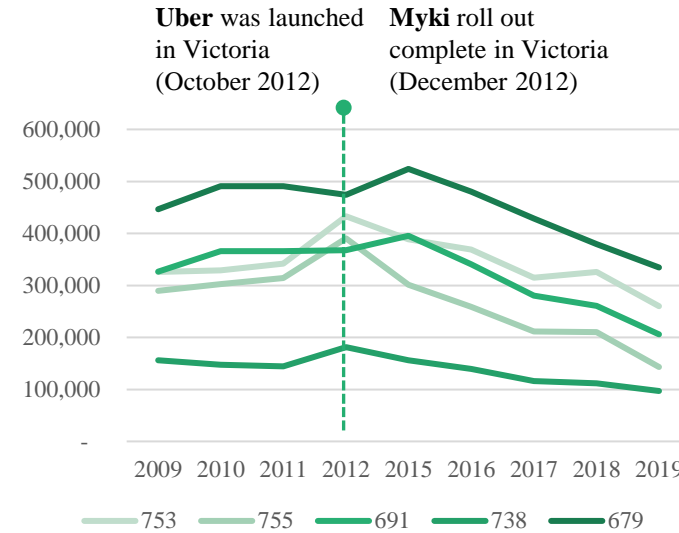**Myki** roll out complete in Victoria (December 2012)

Figure 16: PTV Bus routes in Melbourne's Eastern Region and their historical patronage

Using a benchmark of 20 boarding's per service hour as a measure of economic viability, analysis in 2018 showed only 60% of the metropolitan bus network (around 345 routes) are considered to be performing at efficient levels (Infrastructure Victoria, 2018). The remaining 40% of the bus network was considered to be underperforming. These routes generally serve sparsely populated areas with a high proportion of car ownership, and/ or provide infrequent services along meandering routes with a limited span of hours.

What we heard

> "Touching myki on and off, I forget and costs more… I have seen people struggle to get off in time, it is too busy, won't make the stop"

> "You need to allow a lot of time for the bus… sometimes it is late, I have the app but not sure it always works… just easier to get a cab"

> ""We need increased frequency of buses, with better time tables… more public transport options"

Provocations

• How do we optimise the existing bus network in the Eastern Region?
• How can we use existing infrastructure and made it work smarter for changing needs?
• Could the Eastern Region adapt existing PT stops to become "virtual"?
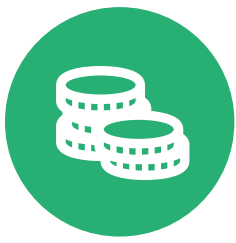
Issues with funding and recognition of community transport inhibits use and sees inconsistent services throughout the region

Victoria's transport funding and organisational system inhibits consistent approaches to community transport provision within the region. Siloed systems and small-scale public and private providers create a mosaic of approaches to transport in the Eastern Region and making inclusive transport approaches and initiatives difficult to plan and orchestrate. This causes complexities at an organisation and user scale with system access becoming cumbersome, transport resources and information siloed dependent on provider and access pathways.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• The network is incohesive due to different funding and governance structures between providers and modes. • Duplicate systems and provision across the region is clear.	• Different transport systems requiring different processes to book, use and receive help on transport systems, confusing commuters.	• Providers not seeing support and funding evident in other states nationally, also as seen in best practice global models with focused funding and uniformed governance. • Models operating very independently in region.

| Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• DoT providing Public Transport through Victoria has clear lines of processing, • Public funding and jurisdiction as organised at a State level	• Many community transport operators rely on volunteer staff due to limited funding, • Siloed structures between models and companies	• Commercial models operators may have some commercial subsidies (e.g., MTPT) • Strongly private entities and organisation business models	• Ownership and position of these models may be unclear in the public / private space due to unclear strategy, governance and funding for on-demand

What we heard

"[Providers need] more volunteers, more funding, more staff, efficient software needed for broader provision"

"We rely on volunteer drivers and therefore cannot commit to 'on-demand' transport requests. COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the availability for our drivers"

"There is historical disadvantage with Victoria's system and funding... it is not like for like (with other states"

Provocations

• How do we create an inclusive organisational structure for on-demand transport in the Eastern Region?
• Who holds the organisational responsibility for community transport funding and support?
• How will we advocate this agenda back to a state and federal level?
• How can we better understand what Community Transport and On-Demand Transport services provide the best possible community outcomes and value for money?
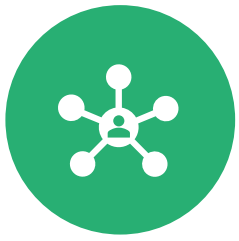
Local Government involvement is important to increasing trust in community transport services and providers

While a range of transport providers currently sit in the Eastern Region, user feedback indicated council oversight, provision or "stamp of approval" helped users to have less apprehension and more trust in system uptake. The region is complex and vast needing careful coordination to succeed.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• The population density and user base varies greatly across the region • Areas such as the Yarra Ranges propose complex challenges to deliver an adequate level of service	• Engagement levels with current systems vary depending on prior knowledge and relationships, stronger advocacy and support would help uptake	• Providers working with local council for sponsorship, oversight or regional needs or information sharing could increase uptake and longevity of system

Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• Public transport options, new routes, provision or changes should be communicated through council where possible for greater trust, awareness and uptake of system	• Level of community transport provision varies from council area dependent on funding, ownership and service provision	• Some local government areas and vulnerable user groups are heavily dependent on commercial models due to lack of other accessible and efficient options	• Council bodies should be key advocates in advertising and oversight of new transport opportunities in the Eastern Region to help uptake and coordination.

- The local government sector is a significant part of the Victorian economy—the state's 79 local councils, spend around $7 billion on service delivery and $2 billion on infrastructure annually, and manage over $70 billion in public assets. (Victorian Auditors Generals Office, 2017). These resources could adapt where feasible to be used to assist with community transport options, increasing information provision, visibility and coordination from a local government position of power and trust.

- Within Metropolitan Melbourne, the Eastern Region accounts for 20% of municipalities, with six Local Government Areas. This includes the largest (land area) Local Government Area of Yarra Ranges sitting on the metropolitan fringe. However, this region also has the lowest population density. This demonstrates the regional challenges Eastern Melbourne faces and need for coordinated and efficient service provision due to the varying conditions and large jurisdiction throughout communities.

What we heard

"More, consistent and reliable transport in areas of ageing populations"

"more transport options linking the Eastern Region together instead of travelling into the city and back out or taking multiple buses to a neighbouring suburb"

"More coordinated buses and trains, rather than hopping on and off 3-4 different times to reach a destination a car could get to in 15 minutes"

"It (community transport) is about empowering users… giving control of their journeys and options they have to move around… give independence"

"Once they are comfortable with a provider (or system) they will stick with it… change can be overwhelming"

"Once I trust the driver I will keep using… even if more expensive I know they will do a good job, I know they won't leave me"

Provocations

- How can local councils have a more active role in community accessibility coordination?
- Could the Eastern Region councils work together to provide more system oversight?
- What resources within local council could be leveraged to achieve these ambitions and sponsorship of services?

Greater awareness of existing services and travel options is needed through easily accessible information - to increase uptake of public and community transport services

There is a lack of visible information and service awareness throughout Eastern Region. Many user groups are unaware of community mobility providers and services. There is a need for greater Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) considerations, accessibility and digital literacy consideration of information shared to ensure all users have the first opportunity to obtain knowledge of new and available transport provision.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• Disengagement and lack of uptake with a range of transport services due to lack of knowledge, understanding or awareness between providers, users and stakeholders	• Many users (including vulnerable user groups) are unaware of their current transport options and reverting to car use or taxi as known and trusted services	• Providers not meeting full user base potential and/or missing market areas due to lack of awareness of their provision and availability. Costly and unfeasible operations.

Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• Underutilisation of existing service, minimum level of service must be met however services not generating value	• Poor service awareness limit provider uptake by those in need. • Services currently over or under-utilised causing inconsistency	• Private providers often supporting vulnerable members of community for transport needs, even though other options may be available and cheaper	• Need for greater understanding of on-demand role in market, and visibility to local users to ensure sustainable uptake in delivery

Getting on the Bus

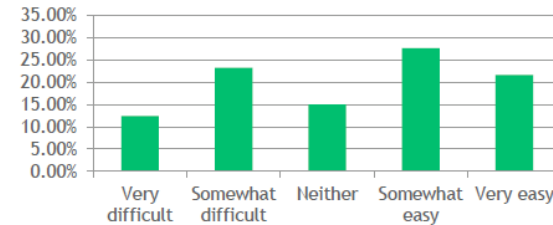How easy or difficult is it for you to get on and off a bus? (n=1061)

Figure 17: Knox City Council, 2020, Age Friendly Knox community engagement Survey

The 2019 Customer experience bulletin by the Public Transport Ombudsman showed information availability was the highest area of complaint. The report highlighted the disruptions and complications are difficult for commuters to navigate and can be particularly challenging for people with disabilities and more vulnerable travellers. When transport users have clear and accurate information, they are prepared and able to take steps to deal with the disruption to their lives.

What we heard

"How do we create an awareness in the minds of people who need it (community transport) that these are one of their best options… we need to bridge the gap, don't understand how that gap is so big with awareness"

"I didn't even know half these existing (community transport providers), I wish I had known sooner"

"I use shuttles or private companies (taxis)… there isn't community transport available for me in me region otherwise I would"

Provocations

• How does the Eastern Region greater showcase its transport options to its users?

• Could the Eastern Region demonstrate service availability on a wider level?

• How could we create a central "first port of call" for users to decipher transport options?

Technology is enabling efficiencies in processes but could marginalise access for vulnerable user groups

Increase of online booking systems and organisation digitisation help providers to create greater efficiencies in processes. However, there is a digital literacy lag among vulnerable users, this can marginalise use of some modern systems. Engagement indicating many community transport users preferring phone call booking methods and distrust of unknown platforms.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• Different booking systems, operational technology, data sources and more creating an array of transport resources and processes in the region.	• Preference amongst engaged users for analogue and phone booking systems • Lack of central platform or help point for users, all provider specific	• Preference for phone call and analogue systems by vulnerable users is resource heavy, costly and time consuming for many providers • Lack of communal resources for operational requirements

Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• Myki ticketing, online information and journey planning across PTV network. • Does not include other providers	• Community providers in region heavily dependent on phone call systems for transport booking	• Commercial data and systems may assist in regional transport planning and resource sharing • Digital platforms and processes vary from organisations	• Digital increase for future provision should be met with contingent plans for broader accessibility and engagement • Utilising existing data may

How do users currently book your Transport service?

📞 **75%** Phone call
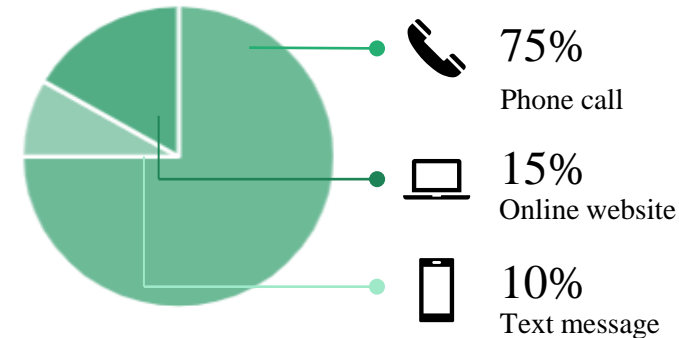
💻 **15%** Online website

📱 **10%** Text message

Figure 18: Arup (2020) Eastern Transport Solutions , Community Transport Provider Survey

A report by the Commissioner for Senior Victorians (2020) *Ageing Well in a Changing World*, highlighted one of the barriers to aging well is difficulty of navigating service systems to find support. This was further highlighted through user engagement and provider feedback. The is a large preference for phone call booking systems amongst vulnerable users and apprehension of new technology.

What we heard

> *"Someone put the app on my phone, but I don't know how to use it... how do I know if it is booked... much easier just to ring and ask someone"*

> *"I prefer to just call and speak to someone, then you know for sure"*

> *"We are conscious of delivering for the next generation users(who have high digital literacy) but still need to cater to the current and vulnerable users who don't use"*

Provocations

• How do we ensure we have contingency for digital platforms and operations?
• Could the Eastern Region create wider provision of digital upskilling to empower users?
• How do vulnerable users know how to use and that they can trust online systems?
• What does a highly accessible, effective and efficient regional integrated system look like?.

Better recognition that good local transport options underpin socially engaged communities, driving independence and empowerment

Despite environmental extremities or changes in community operations, there is always need for ongoing transport provision for all commuters; but especially vulnerable members of community requiring access and support to engage with local services and amenities. Principles such as the 20-minute neighbourhood from Plan Melbourne highlight the need for local access, this requires functional and dependable transport options to facilitate ongoing connection.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• The large areas of the Eastern Region require flexible and comprehensive transport models to ensure all residents stay mobile and engaged with community	• Users require transport for essential services but also need support for incidental, social or flexible movement throughout the region and beyond	• Transport providers need support to deliver beyond essential or minimum level of service if greater community engagement is to be achieved

Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• Current public transport provision is not accessible to all users • Network gaps deterring uptake and community engagement	• Community accessibility is fundamental to empower vulnerable user groups and keep residents engaged	• Commercial providers may not be feasible options for local users	• Future models should be highly flexible to cater to variant and spontaneous user needs, encouraging ongoing community connection

Figure 19: Plan Melbourne, 2018, 20 Minute Neighbourhood principles

What we heard

"I would get that (local community transport) if there was one in my area, but I don't think there is one that I could use around here"

"We get them (community members) out doing things to maintain independence in home"

"Our clients are often quite vulnerable... transport not only gets them where they need to go but lets them be more involved locally"

Provocations

• How do we deliver transport not just for journey needs for broader socialisation and engagement?

• Could the Eastern Region provide transport options to encourage greater public participation?

• How do we co-design future transport opportunities with residents?

• What specific transport models and programs are delivering the best mental and physical health and social outcomes for the community including specific vulnerable cohorts? What can we take from these?

Ensuring affordable and timely access to services and programs is essential to decreasing social isolation in the community

Transport infrastructure plays an essential role in community engagement and socialisation. Without adequate provision throughout regions, there is a high risk of social disconnect and isolation of residents. Research has shown that chronic social isolation increases the risk of mental health issues like depression, anxiety and substance abuse, as well as chronic conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. It also raises the risk of dementia in older adults. Therefore preventing this in communities is critical.

Considerations

Eastern transport network	Transport Users	Transport Providers
• The large breadth of the Eastern Region increasing likelihood of provision gaps and isolated communities, increasing the need for comprehensive transport solutions to ensure engagement	• Users require quality transport services to facilitate local engagement • Vulnerable users and isolated regions are at increased risk of disengagement	• Transport providers have a challenging task in providing service to low density and low uptake communities, they need support to facilitate quality regional service that respond to changing needs

| Public transport network	Community transport and mobility provision	Commercial provision (taxis, uber, private fleets)	Future on-demand models
• Current public transport provision does not adequately service all communities • Network gaps increase risk of prolonged isolation	• Community transport can offer a level of care required for vulnerable users to engage with the community. This is a critical component to transport networks.	• Commercial providers may be more adaptive to service isolated areas in community • Commercial providers may not be feasible options for local users	• Future models able to cater to isolated community areas and provide high quality services as required to facilitate greater community engagement
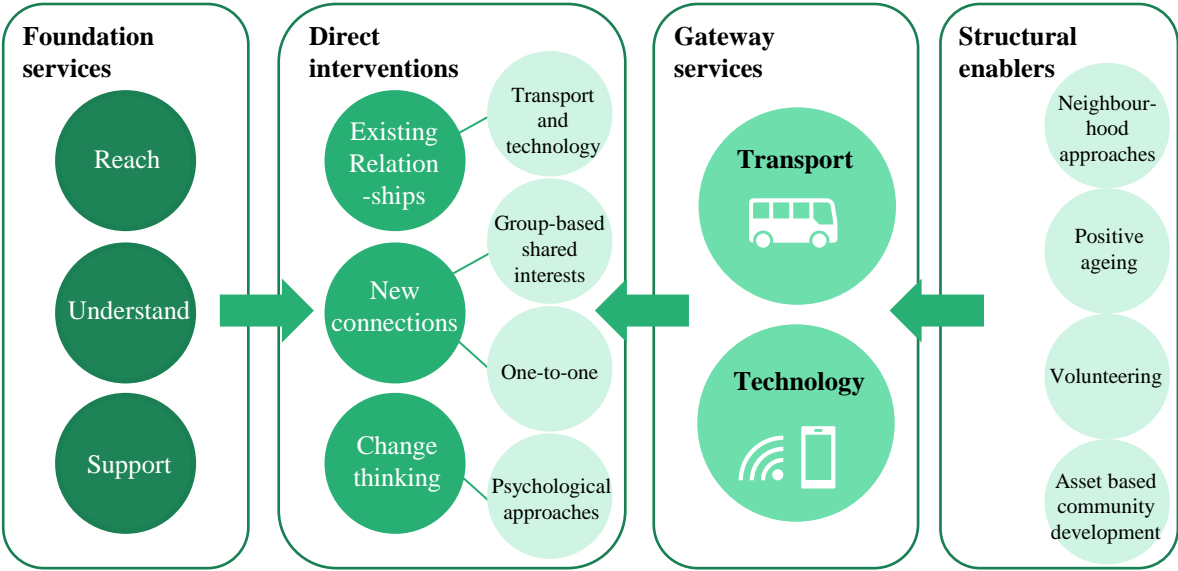
Figure 20: Based on Bath and North East Somerset Council UK, 2020, A new framework for interventions for loneliness and isolation

What we heard

"Aside from going to these appointments, I don't really go out.. It is too difficult and easier to just stay at home"

"I consider cost, it is a bit expensive but I understand why, but would be keen for more discounts to use the (public) bus more"

"(Transport) keep people living longer, more independence in households, enhance health and wellbeing"

"All community transport providers and giving opportunities for connection and socialisation"

Provocations

• How do we ensure all communities and users within the Eastern Region have access to adequate transport?
• How can low density and remote regions have the opportunity to readily engage with society as more populated, urban areas in the community?
• How do we ensure equity and affordable of suitable transport services for vulnerable user groups?

Case Study
FlexiRide

Context

- FlexiRide offers a new on-demand bus service that operates only when booked with no fixed route within a designated trial area of the Eastern Region. The 12 month service trial (implemented in December 2020) has replaced the Rowville Telebus.

- Users can book a trip from their nearest stop, to/from Stud Park Shopping Centre or Ferntree Gully Station.

- FlexiRide services run Monday-Friday from 6am to 8pm and can be booked up to seven days in advance.

- Passengers can book a service either through phone or the FlexiRide smartphone app.

- One of the main objectives of the FlexiRide programme is to optimise first and last mile connections through more frequent services with decreased wait times.
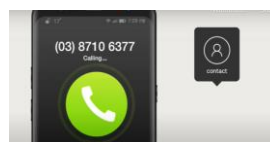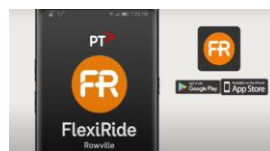

Figure 21: FlexiRide service area
(Source: Public Transport Victoria, 2020)

Challenges

- **No services during weekends**

- **Car dependency –** Melbourne's outer east is notorious for higher car ownership and lower residential densities than many other areas within the city. Bus services are an undesirable transport mode and carry historical stigma within the public transport system, deterring engagement.

- **Variable arrival times** – If multiple people are on the service all with different destination and pick up points, service may be slow and cause arrival times to be highly variable dependent on fleet and demand. Use may be clustered in peak times and delays experienced deter ongoing use.

- **Competing services** – FlexiRide model mirrors those of rideshare services which are app based and on-demand. Passengers may prefer the comfort of a private vehicle, especially with recent restrictions.

- **Digital literacy** – Although the option to book a service through phone still exists within the FlexiRide trial, it is clear that there is a emphasis on transitioning to a digital boking platform. This is evident through the use of virtual bus stops. This concept may be confusing to older people and vulnerable user groups, especially those who do not have a device to reference during the commute.

Opportunities

- **Integrated system-** Building upon Melbourne's existing Public Transport network, through utilisation of Public Transport Victoria (PTV) governance, organisation, branding and ticketing. The trust and uptake of the system should be more seamless and easy for users to navigate through familiarity.

- **Infrastructure decrease –** with the increase of digital stops, there is a decreased need for physical bus stops within low density suburban areas which are extremely costly and underutilised.

- **Bus network change -** Infrastructure Victoria regards 20 passenger boarding's per bus service hour as a minimum threshold for a bus route to be considered productive. A significant number of services in the EMP are below this threshold. FlexiRide type services provide the opportunity to increase patronage by better responding to the communities demands and needs

- **Test, trial and evolve-** the smaller scale trial area and timing of the FlexiRide model gives opportunity to reassess performance and modify incrementally, allowing a clear point of reflection and evaluation on performance before revisiting approach or expanding trial provision.

- **Local needs** – FlexiRide services can improve community accessibility by delivering services closer to where people live while remaining as affordable as a regular bus service.

5. Opportunities and Actions

- Opportunities for regional success

- Opportunities and possible actions

- Case Study : FlexiRide

- Case Study : Bayswater Business Precinct

ARUP

Key insights

Opportunity areas

ARUP

Varied user requirements and abilities means there is no **"one size fits all"** public transport solution

Societal shifts, growing public transport gaps and increased expectations are likely leading to declines in **bus patronage**

Issues with **funding and recognition** of community transport inhibits use and sees inconsistent services throughout the region

Local Government involvement is important to **increasing trust** in community transport services and providers

Streamline community transport resources and improve coordination of services

Taking a Mobility as a Service approach through **stronger integration** of services and technology

Engage and co-create an agreed **integrated transport plan** for the EMP Region

Greater awareness of existing services and travel options is needed through easily **accessible information - to increase uptake** of public and community transport services

Technology is enabling efficiencies in processes but could **marginalise access** for vulnerable user groups

Better recognition that good local transport options underpin socially engaged communities, driving **independence and empowerment**

Ensuring **affordable and timely access** to services and programs is essential to decreasing social isolation in the community

Engage with the community to improve **awareness** and **uptake** of existing services

The time is right for **testing, and piloting new service** models

Aligning stakeholders, and setting in place **governance** around the **provision of community transport**

Opportunities for regional success

Building on the foundation of the insights formed for the Eastern Region. A series of opportunities have been established to provide direction for regional success. These six opportunity areas address the core challenges and observations specific to the Eastern Region in order to work towards an inclusive transport system through outlining actions towards uptake.

Streamline community transport resources and improve coordination of services

Taking a Mobility as a Service approach through **stronger integration** of services and technology

Engage and co-create an agreed **integrated transport plan** for the EMP Region

Engage with the community to improve **awareness** and **uptake** of existing services

The time is right for **testing, and piloting new service** models

Aligning stakeholders, and setting in place **governance** around the **provision of community transport**
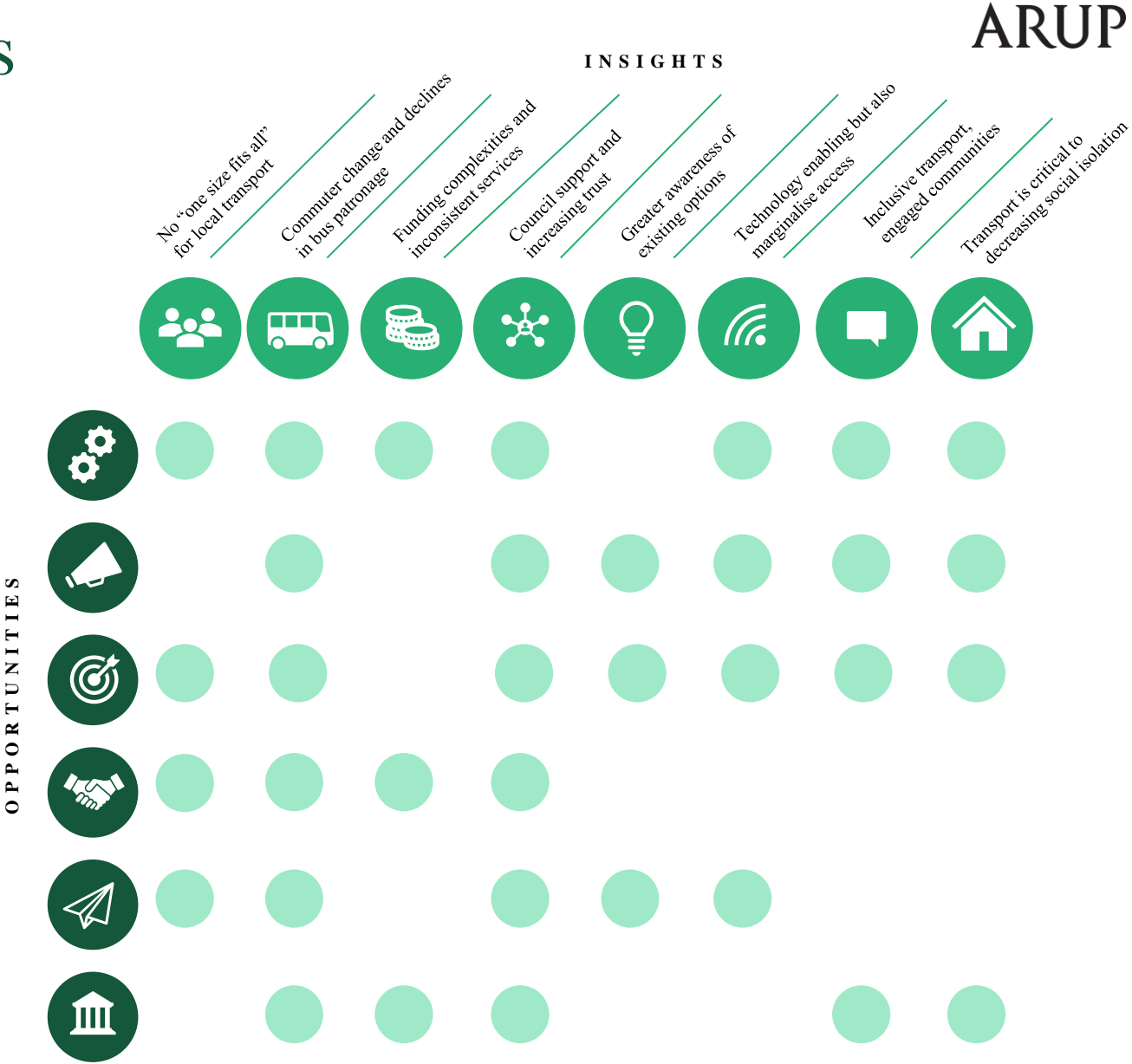

Figure 22: Alignment table key insights to opportunities

Streamline community transport resources and improve coordination of services

ARUP

A lack of coordination between community transport providers, can mean limited resources are not used in the most efficient manner and the service to customers can be impacted. The overlap of providers in one area (incl. Local Government) and limited coverage in others provides a clear opportunity to unify resources, learnings and assets to create a more resilient and cohesive approach to community transport.

Service overlap and gaps

- Community transport is currently offered by an array of providers including Local Government. Non-for-profit providers mostly rely on volunteer drivers and can face several challenges including- covering people who are sick, regular government funding and maintaining enough money to cover new vehicles and servicing. Alongside this the age profile of volunteers is general skewed towards an older and retired demographic, posing increase risk on health and workability of providers.

- It is acknowledged that community transport in a metro setting is not recognised as a form of public transport, but rather fills the gap for those people needing assistance with their journey's and face barriers to using regular public transport.

- There can be a strong emphasis on providers to service the ageing community (which is vital), with less emphasis on other users particularly young people struggling to participate in education and employment.

Improve cooperation between existing providers to optimise services

- Several stakeholders put forward '*better pooling of resources across providers*', would help streamline service delivery. This included: consolidated booking systems, and back of office support. This would allow drivers to cross LGA borders and provide connections into adjacent council areas avoiding siloed provision.

- Sharing of resources could help lead to better vehicle availability, less vehicle down time, and a bigger range of vehicle types available for users.

- Potential for single platform use across all operators as seen in NSW, exploration of joint procurement to ensure fleet coordination and optimal regional coverage in transport network.

Possible actions:

Early Wins *Initiatives that could be delivered in the short term*	People, Planning & Processes *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	Policy & Strategy *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
• Services provided by community transport providers could be better recognised and promoted through State and Local Government websites. • Liaise with community and local transport providers to include their service information through other distribution channels. • State Government to set minimal service requirements for Community Transport providers. This may include training requirements.	• Investigate a cooperative booking system for community transport providers. This may include using a provider's existing platform, or leveraging the Moovit platform used for the 'FlexiRide' trial in Rowville. • State Government to investigate setting up a dedicated personal to supporting community transport service delivery. • State Government to investigate new payment and funding opportunities, such as access to the Multi Taxi Purpose program. • LGAs to work with Community Transport Providers to investigate ways of sharing fleet & resources. Or possibly using providers to operate LGA services to create a regular income stream.	• State Government to develop strategy and policies around the provision of community transport and its role within the local transport public transport network. • State Government to work with Federal Government to investigate sustainable funding options for community transport services. • Encourage a more evenly spread community transport service provision across the EMP region. Note this might be dependent on updated State policies and new funding arrangements.

Taking a Mobility as a Service approach through stronger integration of services and technology

Traditionally, our mobility has been provided for by managing fleets of vehicles around networks, framed by strategic transport planning objectives. Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) challenges this by personalising the mobility offerings both from the perspective of the policy maker and for travellers themselves. MaaS can be confused with on-demand transport, as these are considered modes of transport.

Figure 24 shows that MaaS should be regarded as the platform which sits between individual modes of transport and the customer acting as the aggregator and thus allowing the customer to access the most appropriate form of transport for each individual journey.

Mobility-as-a-Service approach

• Taking a Mobility-as-a-Service approach, would allow for trip planning, bookings and payments to be made in a more integrated way. It would also allow users to choose the right service offering for them. For example, sometimes the bus might be the best offer while other times a taxi is appropriate.

• Bundling services and fares can optimise service provision, performance and attractiveness of local transport services.

• It is acknowledged that MaaS may look quite different for users who have the ability to easily use a digital platform and access an array of modes versus those you need supported journeys. For example, people who need support may not be able to use a digital platform and need to use a more traditional call centre.

Bus Network Planning and Mobility-as-a-Service

With limited resources there are two key approaches that can be taken to bus network planning, either:

• *Network coverage* – generally sees a dispersed network of routes providing coverage across the city with targets like: 80% of people are within 400m of a bus stop (regardless of frequency and destination). Achieving coverage can result in low ridership but ensure services are provided to people who rely on local and accessible public transport options, especially vulnerable user groups; or

• *Network productivity* – generally plans the network around frequency (turn up and go), speed and where the demands are for regular bus services. Achieving productivity can see higher patronage but result in little to no services for certain areas. Under this scenario MaaS and/or on-demand services become vital to plugging the gaps of service provision.
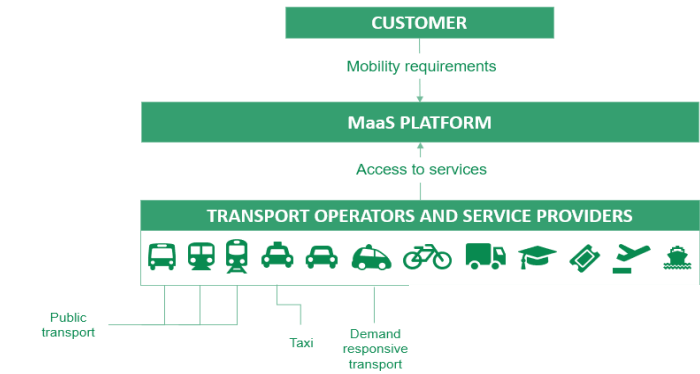

Figure 23: Mobility-as-a-Service Overview

Possible actions:

Easy wins *Initiatives that could be delivered in the short term*	People, Planning & Processes *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	Strategy & Policy *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
• Work with State Government to select area for trialling a reformed bus network focusing on 'network productivity' and integrated on-demand services to better understanding the implications for customers.	• Support MaaS platform providers to provide public transport services through their service as an integrated product. • Better utilise the available capacity in the taxi system due non-peak times to provide local transport services.	• Use learnings from bus network trial to develop future approaches to bus network planning in Victoria. • State Government could confirm their policy and strategy around MaaS, including what does MaaS look like for people needing supported journeys.

Engage and co-create an agreed integrated transport plan for the EMP Region

Given the impacts of COVID-19 and issues facing the Eastern Region (e.g social isolation), it is an opportune time to consider a co-design process for developing an agreed transport plan for the EMP region that brings together local government aspirations, State Government planning and existing services. This will seek to involve the community in the future of the transport network and services.

Given the number of plans that exist across Local Government and differing service levels. This would be an opportunity to link plans together and gain agreement on a place-based integrated transport plan for the region.

By having an agreed regional plan will help to ensure local public transport services are more evenly delivered, and community transport services considered as part of a broader integrated transport network.

Co-design approach

- It will be important to take a co-design approach to the developing the plan.
- Local ownership and engagement are key to ensuring local user needs are deeply understood in system design. Stakeholders and users should work collectively with designers, researchers and operators to ensure a system has both organisational and community drivers.
- A co-design approach will help mitigate project risks, increase uptake and ease implementation.
- In order to increase public value, those stakeholders who will be most affected and in a position to benefit from upgrades to the transport service provision must be considered first.

Engage
- Involve local users, stakeholders, designers and organisations in process

Plan
- Collectively plan service ambitions and requirements for region

Explore
- Map out options and possibilities for resources, pathways for delivery

Develop
- Decide on best options collectively to take forward and progress

Evolve
- Evolve options for delivery
- Monitor and change as needed
- Repeat process as required

Figure 24: Co Design Approach

Possible actions

Easy wins *Initiatives that could be delivered in the short term*	People, Planning & Processes *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	Strategy & Policy *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
• Engage LGAs on willingness to create an agreed integrated transport plan for the region.	• Co-design a plan for the region. Creating clear objectives. • Establish ongoing community steering committee for the plan.	• Set in place integrated transport plan for EMP • Advocate for investment in the plan and identified priority services.

Engage with the community to improve awareness and uptake of existing services

Certain segments of community feel they are not very well informed about transport options, including available community transport and on-demand options. Language and terminology used to define the network, alongside accessibility of information may cause confusion. It is argued enhanced customer information is needed.

Accessibility of central transport information

- Visibility of information and services is inconsistent, many stakeholders and users outlining they have obtained information through "word of mouth" and not firsthand information from service providers.
- Residents voiced one central point for transport information and options would save time, money and resources, as well as improve uptake of services.
- Contingent help points, phone lines and resources should be made clear and available for those not willing or able to engage with digital platforms.
- Though digital platforms are improving platforms for a wide array of users it is important to consider the useability of community transport and support needed to service a diverse group of user needs.

Regional campaigning

- There is a need to reduce stigma around public transport, e-hail services (e.g. Uber) and community transport providers, with many user groups indicating they will stick to methods known and trusted; with hesitancy to try new providers for fear of unknown or needing to share with other users.
- Data suggests many commuters are opting for point-to-point rideshare options over bus services.
- Increased uptake of shared and on-demand transport options could considerably people's access to services and opportunities.

Possible Actions

Easy wins *Initiatives that could be delivered in the short term*	People, Planning & Processes *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	Strategy & Policy *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
• Review existing information platforms and resources. Update where necessary • Create accessibility checklist for transport information provision.	• Create user reference group to better understand needs and knowledge of service options.	• Develop travel demand management strategy / program that focuses on engaging people on the options available and encouraging wider mode shift to more sustainable modes. • Develop customer engagement / campaign strategy to encourage people to use existing services and providers in the region.

The time is right for testing, and piloting new service models

Falling patronage on existing on-road public transport services is creating the need to pilot and test new service models. And the recent introduction of FlexiRide in the Eastern Region demonstrates a potential appetite for on-demand services. Learnings from pilots and trials will help assist the region to consider more large scale implementation.

In addition continuation of local programmes, including digital literacy skill sessions, behaviour change campaigns, transport buddy systems and local engagement programmes will help with the delivery of pilots and trials. Instilling confidence in users to try and hopefully improve their access to services and opportunities.

Possible service models

- Regionally and globally there are several innovative commercial models for on-demand public transport services that offer inspiration and learnings for potential local models, some of these are discussed in Appendix A of the Evidence Base Report.
- NSW and QLD's approach to community transport policy and funding is different from Victoria. Given the role of the Federal Government in recent years changing to fund aged care and NDIS there is and opportunity to test and pilot new funding models for community transport.
- The recent changes to allow Multi Purpose Taxi Program users to use Uber services is a great example of a trial initiative. New initiatives could include:
  - Allowing a wider group of people in outer areas to be eligible for the MPTP - if they use a shared Uber service within 10km of their home.
  - Applying a fixed rate if using a shared service within 10km of a persons home e.g. $5 per trip – possibly a MYKI discount if connecting with major public transport services.
  - Utilising maxi taxis during non-peak periods to provide local public transport services.
  - Re-allocating the $22m Covid-19 industry support package for commercial passenger vehicles to subsidise rides for passengers.
  - Trial a shared service (incl. taxis & Ubers) connecting major train stations with key precincts outside the main operating span of local buses.
  - Work with major shopping centres to provide shopper buses.

What we heard

"Uber style council run service , funded by govt would be great."

"More coordinated buses and trains, rather than hopping on and off 3-4 different times to reach a destination a car could get to in 15 minutes"

Possible Actions

Easy wins *Initiatives that could be delivered in the short term*	People, Planning & Processes *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	Strategy & Policy *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
• Engage existing providers and stakeholders on willingness to participate in trails and pilots. • Start customer data collection of existing services to inform pilots & trials. • Consider a market sounding or EoI to engage providers on operating trials and innovative pilots.	• Formalise working group including community representatives to create use cases for pilots and trials to address. • Create community engagement plan. • Plan ongoing monitoring, control and review points	• Deliver program of pilot/s within set parameters of trial • Set in place benefits management strategy to ensure trials an pilots are delivering public value.

Aligning stakeholders, and setting in place governance around the provision of community transport

One of the key priorities of the Eastern Metropolitan Partnership as highlighted throughout this report is addressing social isolation and creating inclusive and innovative transport solutions for the region to help mitigate disengagement, loneliness and health implications to residents. To achieve this, their needs strong stakeholder alignment and a robust governance process sitting above the provision of community transport services.

Community transport challenge

- Community transport is facing significant pressures for several reasons. These include changes in funding models between State and Federal Governments, evolving nature of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

- There are some conflicting views and ambiguity around the role of State, Local Government and Non-for-Profit in supporting and funding community transport provisions in the region. Greater exploration and clarity of these roles and available funding would help establish a clearer pathway to success.

Place-led Approach to Accessibility

- Localised governance and advocacy for the Eastern Region is needed to ensure a contextually appropriate and tangible outlook on transport initiatives that fits within contextual parameters and foreseeable capabilities.

- Involvement from all levels of community will help define contextual needs but also clear gaps in governance and communication lines of transport delivery, highlighting local needs and acknowledging current stakeholder gaps.

Leadership and planning

- With a broad spectrum of stakeholders, leadership is needed from a departmental level to outline clear policy and direction for both existing and new transport delivery services.

- With recent changes to DHHS, it will be important for DoT to coordinate with the new department to define parameters for the provision of Community Transport.
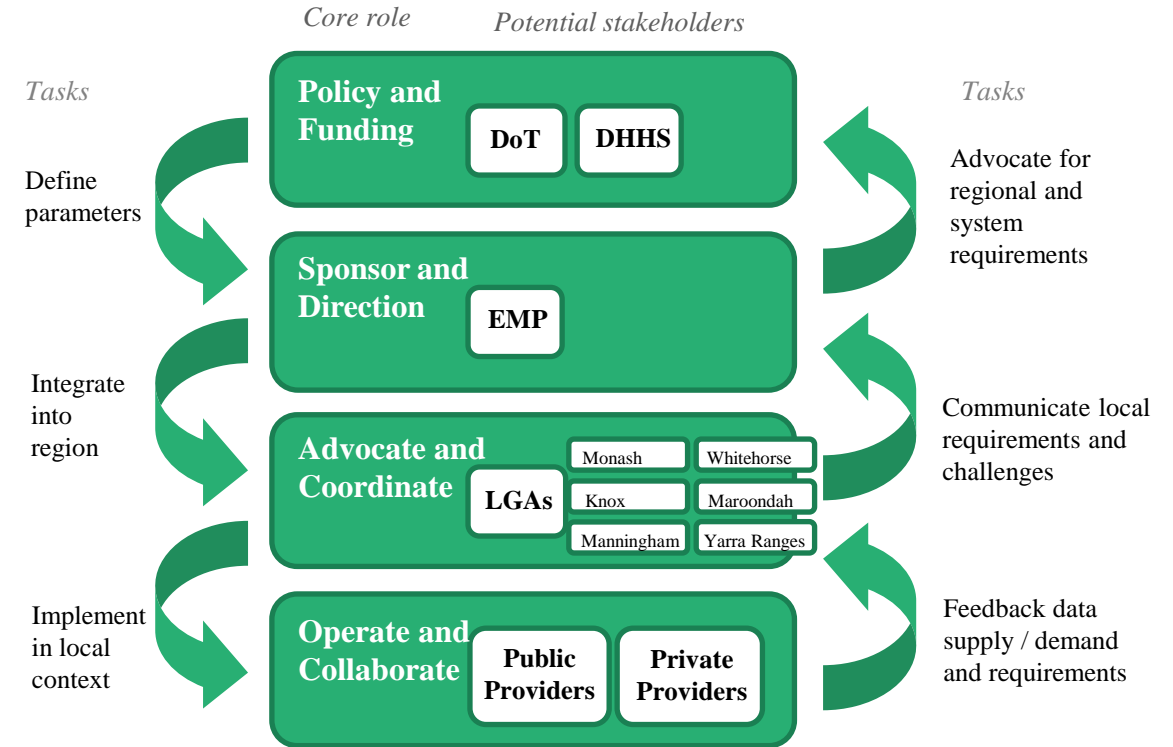

Figure 25: Governance / Stakeholder Process

Possible Actions

Easy wins *Initiatives that could be delivered in the short term*	People, Planning & Processes *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	Strategy & Policy *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
• Map out stakeholders in transport system of region. understand current roles, responsibilities and gaps • Create sponsors for leading regional portfolio, incl. agenda for advocacy	• Establish leading bodies and required roles in area • Advocate at a state (and potentially federal) level for inclusive funding • Establish clear governance lines and regional approach	• Ongoing group updates and forums to discuss success, learnings and initiatives • Create benchmarks for increased regional roles

Case Study
Bayswater Business Precinct (BBP)

Context

- The Bayswater Business Precinct serves as an employment hub and powerhouse economic generator for Melbourne's Eastern Region (contributing over $13.2 billion in output revenue) , spanning across parts of Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges local government areas with over 2000 hectares of employment land.
- Bayswater business precinct employs over 30,000 people through over 4000 registered businesses, 70% of the precinct workforce are local and 35% in manufacturing
- BBP is one of five Australia precincts that are part of the City Partnerships Program, an initiative of the UN Global Compact, the world's largest voluntary corporate social responsibility initiative, striving towards inclusive, safe and resilient cities.

Challenges

- **Car dependency** – approximately 95% of workers arrive by car each day, increasing local congestion. Commuter issues have been highlighted as a major issue for the precinct, with very limited transport options available aside from car, impacting future outlook and accessible to the employment node to users.
- **Underutilised PT** - Public Transport represents an under-utilised mode of transport for those working at the BBP due to inefficient and indirect network provision.
- **Low frequency and indirect bus routes** - most bus routes in the BBP can have a wait time of 30 minutes between services, with some taking up to 60 minutes. Only two routes, the 753 and 901 provide 15-minute headways. There are 94 different route permutations for the 11 available bus routes making it confusing and inefficient for current and potential bus users. E.g., services divert along different streets at certain times of the day.
- **Disconnection-** Many areas within the BBP have a disconnected road network and therefore poor permeability and restricts the ability for potential future bus routes to penetrate into the precinct and increases walk time from bus stops.
- **Accessibility** - Some commuters could be required to walk up to a kilometre more to access their place of work due to poor permeability in the precinct layout and transport access making it an unviable option.
- **Service expectations**- Modern commuter expectations preference efficient point to point journeys, with direct service and ride-share increasing in patronage and public bus use decreasing.
- **Changing ways of working –** With an increase in flexible working schedules and decrease in consistent workplace occupancy there is a challenge in providing consistent level of service to precinct workers.

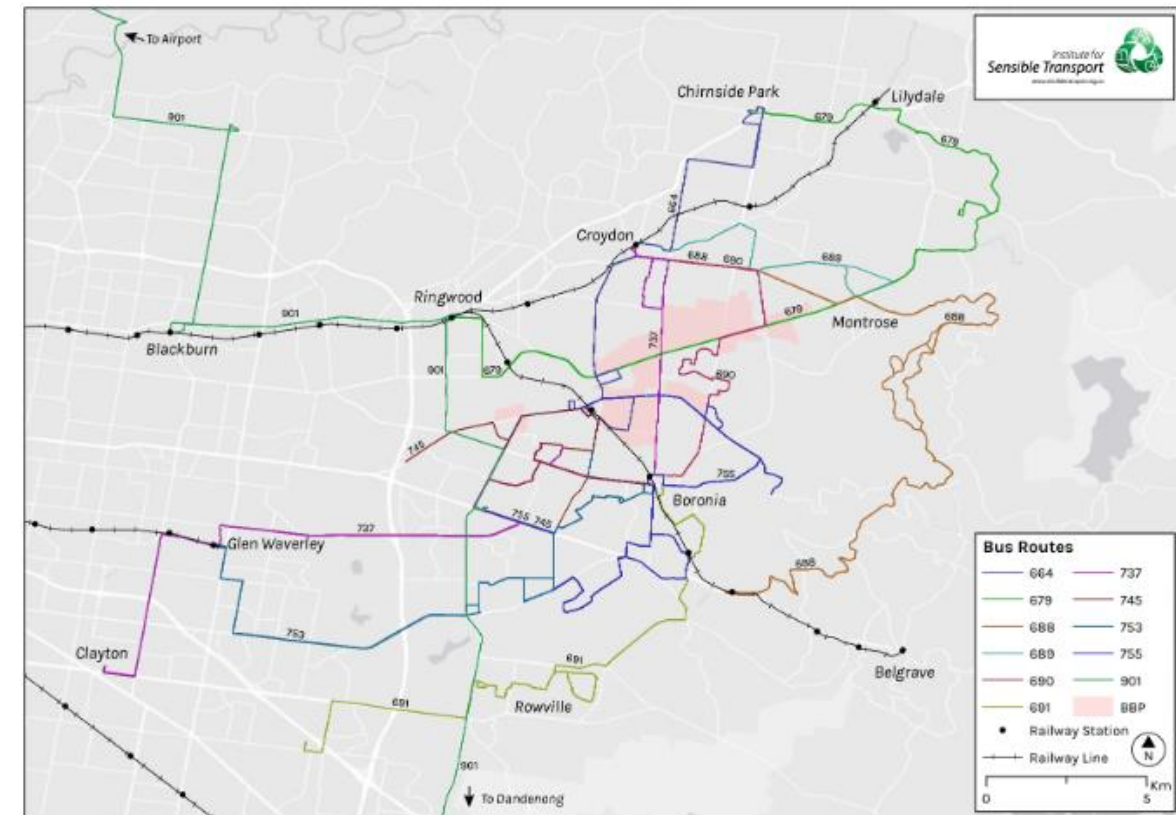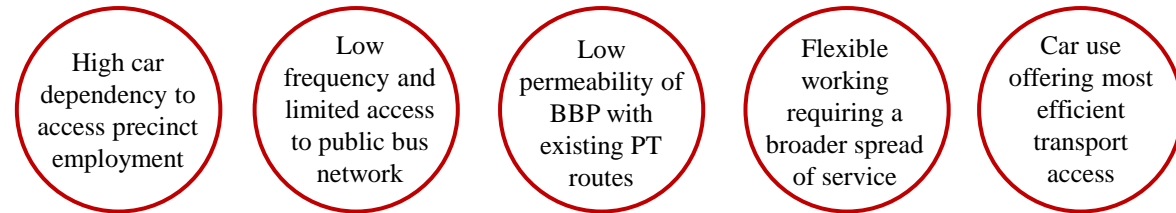**Innovative Community Transport Solutions Report** - Eastern Metropolitan Partnership

(High car dependency to access precinct employment) (Low frequency and limited access to public bus network) (Low permeability of BBP with existing PT routes) (Flexible working requiring a broader spread of service) (Car use offering most efficient transport access)

Figure 26: Bus route servicing in BBP (Institute for Sensible Transport, 2019)

Case Study
Bayswater Business Precinct (BBP)

Opportunities

- **Increase access, engagement and outlook-** It has been suggested the development of public transport priority projects will improve the productivity and economic competitiveness of the precinct via increased access (Institute for Sensible Transport (2019) BBP: Investigating Public Transport Access). Limited options currently deter user groups and business uptake in the region.

- **Partnership and collaboration** – BBP is an economic hub supported by global networks, LGAs and thousands of business initiatives, representing a unique opportunity to combine resources and approaches at a regional scale. Using this existing network and resources to reconfigure, innovate and trial transport solutions leveraging existing networks could receive greater momentum due to the foundations of innovative business and access to local communities.

- **Perception change-** There is an opportunity to re-imagine and demonstrate buses as a modern and exciting way to commute and get around, in addition to better integrating bus and train services. Local and commuter stigma surrounding suburban bus networks has contributed to patronage decline, with introduction of new options showcasing higher levels of service enticing commuters. Advocacy by business and council collectively can have broad impact on changing local perception

- **Local engagement** – With access to a spectrum of local businesses, commuters and networks, BBP should leverage these current and future transport users to co-design future approaches. Instilling ownership within the community to assist with planning, adjustments and uptake will help form a well considered and sustainable approach to local change.

- **Test, trial and evolve-** BBP prioritises local development and innovation, this transport challenge gives the platform to locally lead and deliver a new system that could be rolled out more holistically if successful. Using new technology, local developers and knowledge, this local accessibility challenge is as a unique opportunity to test, trial and evolve a new on-demand system for regional impact. Showcasing skills, innovative thinking and service creation for future impact.

- **On-demand provision-** leveraging existing local community transport resources and/or on-demand public transport options to address the accessibility issues facing the Bayswater Business Precinct could provide a more direct and frequent bus service, minimise parking pressures, and improve public amenity and engagement. Existing fleet resources may offer assistance in peak work commuter windows. The Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) data highlighting peak commuter use 10am-2pm within the Eastern Region highlighting available vehicles to service workforce hours and shuttle programs.

- **Precinct stops** – with permeability as one of the major issues facing the precinct, designated community transport stops within the precinct area could improve the ability of uses to service the internal street network of the BPP. This could be beneficially more broadly into the Eastern Metropolitan Region to increase direct community access into BPP alongside other employment nodes and community assets, increasing community engagement and activity within the precinct.
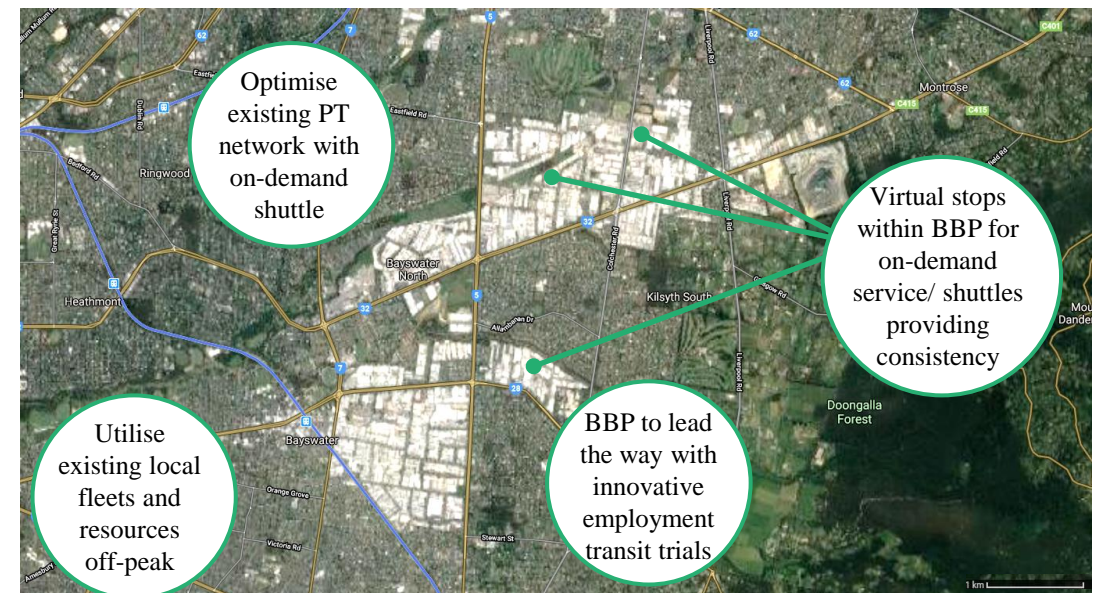

Figure 27: BBP Map (Google Maps, 2020)

6. Roadmap

ARUP

Roadmap

	Easy wins *less perceived investment required to complete*	People, Planning & Processes *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	Strategy & Policy *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
Streamline Community Transport resources and improved the co-ordination of services	• Services provided by community transport providers could be better recognised and promoted through State and Local Government websites. • Liaise with community and local transport providers to include their service information through other distribution channels. • State Government to set minimal service requirements for Community Transport providers. This may include training requirements.	• Investigate a cooperative booking system for community transport providers. This may include using a provider's existing platform or leveraging the Moovit platform used for the 'FlexiRide' trial in Rowville. • State Government to investigate setting up a dedicated provider to supporting community transport service delivery. • State Government to investigate new payment and funding opportunities, such as access to the Multi Taxi Purpose program. • LGAs to work with Community Transport Providers to investigate ways of sharing fleet and resources; or possibly using providers to operate LGA services to create a regular income stream.	• State Government to develop strategy and policies around the provision of community transport and its role within the local transport public transport network. • State Government to work with Federal Government to investigate sustainable funding options for community transport services. • Encourage a more evenly spread community transport service provision across the EMP region. Note this might be dependent on updated State policies and new funding arrangements.
Taking a Mobility as a Service approach through **stronger integration** of services and technology	• Work with State Government to select area for trialling a reformed bus network focusing on 'network productivity' and integrated on-demand services to better understanding the implications for customers	• Support MaaS platform providers to provide public transport services through their service as an integrated product. • Better utilise the available capacity in the taxi system due non-peak times to provide local transport services.	• Use learnings from bus network trial to develop future approaches to bus network planning in Victoria. • State Government could confirm their policy and strategy around MaaS, including what does MaaS look like for people needing supported journeys.
Define suite of existing transport services, enhance utilisation of private provider capacity to optimise	• Engage LGAs on willingness to create an agreed integrated transport plan for the region.	• Co-design a plan for the region. Creating clear objectives. • Establish ongoing community steering committee for the plan.	• Set in place integrated transport plan for EMP • Advocate for investment in the plan and identified priority services.

Roadmap

	Easy wins *less perceived investment required to complete*	**People, Planning & Processes** *Focus on improving service coordination and operations*	**Strategy & Policy** *Realising the vision for inclusive and accessible transport services*
Engage with the community to **improve awareness and uptake** of existing services	• Review existing information platforms and resources. Update where necessary • Create accessibility checklist for transport information provision.	• Create user reference group to better understand needs and knowledge of service options.	• Develop travel demand management strategy / program that focuses on engaging people on the options available and encouraging wider mode shift to more sustainable modes. • Develop customer engagement / campaign strategy to encourage people to use existing services and providers in the region.
The time is right for **testing, and piloting new service** models	• Engage existing providers and stakeholders on willingness to participate in trials and pilots. • Start customer data collection of existing services to inform pilots and trials. • Consider a market sounding or EoI to engage providers on operating trials and innovative pilots.	• Formalise working group including community representatives to create use cases for pilots and trials to address. • Create community engagement plan. • Plan ongoing monitoring, control and review points	• Deliver program of pilot/s within set parameters of trial • Set in place benefits management strategy to ensure trials an pilots are delivering public value.
Aligning stakeholders, and setting in place **governance** around the **provision of community transport**	• Map out stakeholders in transport system of region. understand current roles, responsibilities and gaps • Create sponsors for leading regional portfolio, incl. agenda for advocacy	• Establish leading bodies and required roles in area • Advocate at a state (and potentially federal) level for inclusive funding • Establish clear governance lines and regional approach	• Ongoing group updates and forums to discuss success, learnings and initiatives • Create benchmarks for increased regional roles

ARUP

ARUP

Thank you

We would like to acknowledge the

- Eastern Metropolitan Partnership,
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions,
- Department of Transport
- Department of Health and Human Services,
- Knox City Council,
- Monash City Council,
- VICTAS Community Transport Association,

alongside the many transport providers throughout the Eastern Region, for their valuable time and contribution to this research.

Project Director
Mark Rowland

Project Manager
Lucy O'Connor

For further information please contact

Lucy O'Connor
d: +61 3 9668 5871
e: lucy.oconnor@arup.com

Arup
Sky Park, One Melbourne Quarter
699 Collins Street,
Docklands VIC 3008
www.arup.com