

Transport for NSW

# Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan 2018–2022

Staying active, independent and connected





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# Ensuring our transport network continues to meet the needs of an ageing population

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Who we are as a people, as a community and as a state is changing. We are getting older. We are living longer than ever before. By 2031, one in three people in NSW will be aged 50 years or older. Population ageing is changing life in NSW. Our economy, labour market, healthcare and other essential services, and the fabric of our communities are evolving. The NSW Government recognises that access to appropriate transport is the key to older people's independence, social inclusion and overall wellbeing.

The rate of ageing within the next two decades means that around one in five customers of public transport services and pedestrians will be an older person. Such a dramatic demographic change demands action by government to ensure that the needs of all customers can continue to be met. Frontline customer service staff will require additional training to better support older customers. Supporting those customers with dementia or cognitive impairments will increasingly become a priority. Passenger transport providers will be required to continue improving the accessibility of services and the design of transport infrastructure.

Building on the work of the *NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020* and *Future Transport 2056*, the *Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan 2018-2022* for the first time in history outlines the NSW Government's commitment to providing an accessible and affordable transport system for the entire community. We want older people to maintain their mobility and access the services and activities that can support their health and wellbeing, their independence and their continued participation in, and contribution to, the social and economic life of their communities.



Whilst our record investment in the Transport Access Program has resulted in over 90% of all public transport journeys being accessible, continued planning is critical if NSW is to have a world-class transport system with infrastructure investments and initiatives that support growth, and meet our aspirations for how we want to travel and live.

**The Hon. Andrew Constance, MP**

NSW Minister for Transport and Infrastructure

**The Hon. Tanya Davies, MP**

NSW Minister for Ageing



# 1. Introduction

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A core objective of the *Future Transport Strategy 2056* is access for all, no exceptions. The *Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan 2018-2022* (the Plan) is one of a suite of social inclusions plans that give life to this objective. The Plan deals with the challenges that older people may experience in using public and private transport as they age.

The Plan takes a ‘whole of life’ approach by looking at a person’s changing needs as they move from active ageing to older age. There are four broad outcomes:

- **Keeping active and connected with my community** – Older customers are encouraged and supported to use walking, cycling, driving and public transport.
- **Staying safe** – Older customers are confident accessing and using transport to get around.
- **Being informed** – Older customers have access to the information they need about transport services.
- **Maintaining independence** – Older customers actively plan for their future transport needs and have suitable transport alternatives when they are not able to drive.

The Action Plan in Chapter 4 of this Plan sets out the details of initiatives that will achieve these outcomes for older people.

We’ve talked to older people about their travel and their needs, surveying 2000 seniors to really understand what they want from transport. We’ve also considered independent, state-wide research conducted by the NSW Council on the Ageing. Collectively this research has given Transport for NSW unprecedented insight

into older people’s travel behaviours, modal preferences and perceptions of future transport requirements as they age.

While the population of older people is growing, it is vital to understand that the nature of ‘ageing’ is also changing. Our research shows that older customers are healthier and more active than previous generations; they are working longer and have greater expectations about the quality of services they receive.



The actions in the Plan reflect these common trends and experiences of mobility and access to transport as our customers age. It means that older people will have more transport options, especially when they are no longer able to drive, so that they can remain active, independent and connected to their communities.

Transport for NSW has a range of programs, policies, projects and other initiatives that directly and indirectly support older people's

mobility, whether by walking and cycling, using public transport services, utilising community transport or by driving. In some cases, the programs have been developed as part of improving quality services for all users of public transport.

These initiatives are consistent with the directions of the *NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020*, which promotes inclusion and social engagement for older people.



## 2. Meeting the mobility needs of older people

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Older people reflect the diversity of the general population but, because of their life stage, have different travel and mobility needs and aspirations to other age groups. Their needs may vary depending on their age, health, lifestyle, residential location and stage of life.

The projected growth in the older population is more than double that of the growth in younger age groups throughout NSW. Population ageing is particularly pronounced in the rural and regional areas of the state.

Transport for NSW also acknowledges the special role to be played by the transport sector in strengthening Aboriginal communities particularly for older Aboriginal people. Initiatives into the future will focus on transport improvements to connect Aboriginal communities and older Aboriginal people to employment, recreation and health services. This connection provides further opportunities for people in Aboriginal communities to access sporting, cultural and social events as well as meet family and community obligations.

Transport solutions for an ageing population will need to fully consider the diversity that exists among older people to ensure they can enjoy the benefits of longevity.

Aspects associated with longevity need to be considered in the future design and operation of transport services in NSW. For example, as the population ages, the need to cater for customers with illnesses such as dementia to maintain social connectivity will significantly increase.

An important starting point is to understand what older people value in relation to their day to day transport. Findings from customer research and case studies internationally demonstrate that these requirements are remarkably similar around the world.

### What matters to older customers:

Our customer research and consultations told us that older people want many of the same things as other public transport customers. They are interested in:

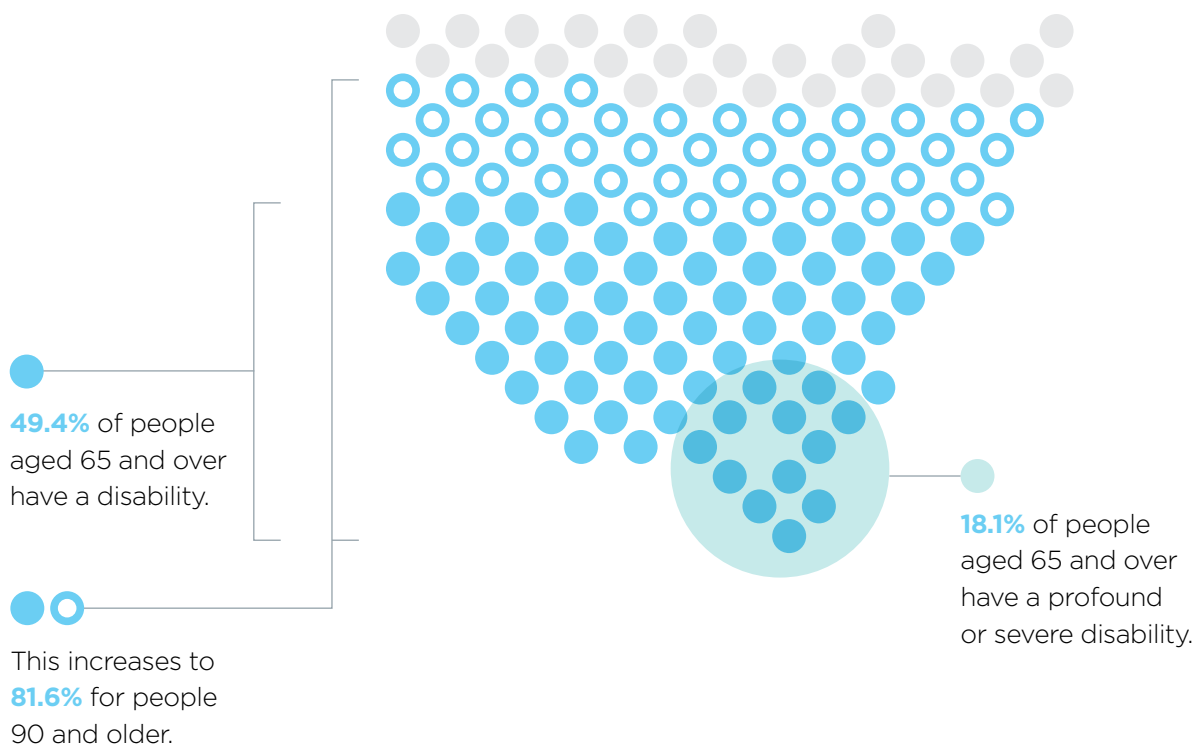
- better public transport infrastructure and assets
- better connectivity, accessibility and comfort
- more flexibility and commuter choice
- higher frequency of services throughout the day
- better management of disruptions
- safety, affordability and the provision of customer service.

Consistent with research conducted in Europe and in Singapore, our older customers have some common characteristics. In general, they:

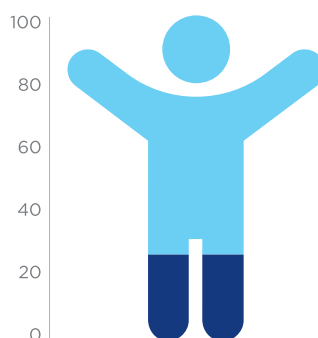
- are not regular public transport users and regard cars as their most important transport mode
- are not planning for when they can no longer drive
- use new technologies, including real-time travel information, differently from younger customers
- prefer walking and buses when they are less active
- expect that specialist transport services will be available when they need them.

# Social profile of NSW's older population

In NSW, more than 1.2 million persons are aged 65 and over.



**36,500** persons aged 65 and over have severe, disabling Dementia or Alzheimer's.



**27.4%** of people aged 65 and over require some form of assistance (including mobility, self-care, and transport) due to disability.



**12%** of people aged 65 and over work full or part time

## Sources:

1. 44300DO001\_2015 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: New South Wales, 2015
2. 2016 Census of Population and Housing General Community Profile Greater Sydney
3. 2016 Census of Population and Housing General Community Profile Rest of NSW



## 2.1 Maintaining mobility throughout later life

Personal mobility generally declines with advanced age and this affects the level of independence that older people can enjoy. The *NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020* is underpinned by a life stages approach that recognises people experience the ageing process in different ways, at different times. Building on this approach, the *Older Persons Mobility Plan 2018-2022* uses these life stages to guide and inform actions that support the mobility of older people in NSW as they age.

Older people's mobility can be understood as progressing through three broad life stages set out in the following table on page 8.

These stages can overlap and are not determined by chronological age. Rather, they show the continuum of changing needs as people age and the associated changes in patterns of use across public, community and private transport.



## A life-stage approach to transport service delivery

<b>Active ageing</b>	<p>Most commonly in the immediate pre and post retirement age when older people are relatively healthy and they are typically more active in the community.</p> <p>People can generally travel independently, with majority driving, walking and/or using public transport without difficulty.</p> <p>Active transport including walking and cycling are encouraged as transport options for active older people.</p> <p>The focus of transport options includes maintaining active ageing as long as possible and not having mobility curtailed as a result of transport services and supporting infrastructure that do not reflect needs during this stage.</p> <p>The “chauffeur burden” of older people in this age group, transporting their parents who are frail or grandchildren, increases the car dependency of this age group.</p>
<b>Self- modified activity</b>	<p>Increased likelihood of disability, associated with injury or illness which may require modification of daily activities.</p> <p>From a transport perspective, people may take fewer trips, travel shorter distances, choose different travel modes and travel at certain times e.g. not at night. Older drivers aged 75 years and older are also subject to annual medical review to maintain a drivers licence.</p> <p>Safe walking environments and clear signage become increasingly important during this phase.</p> <p>Onset of dementia or cognitive impairment may become apparent for some older people during this stage.</p> <p>People are relatively mobile even though they may have entered the Aged Care system and be receiving some assistance with daily living in their own homes.</p>
<b>Supported living</b>	<p>Many people will require some assistance with their mobility for specific activities, such as shopping or getting to and from medical appointments.</p> <p>People who find the use of public transport difficult or are no longer driving may seek assisted transport services, such as community transport or taxis. There may also be additional transport support provided by family and friends.</p> <p>Connection to transport continues to play an important part in supporting older people to remain engaged in their local community.</p>

### 3. Strategic approach and guiding principles

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The Plan is broadly aligned with the principles of the *NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020* as well as the approach and priorities that Transport for NSW is adopting in its Future Transport Strategy 2056 and the supporting *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2018-2022*.

Actions included in this plan are based on a set of guiding principles that determine Transport for NSW's approach to service provision and affirm its commitment to making NSW a better place to live and work.

The principles are outlined below:

#### **Convenient and responsive to customer needs**

Older customers across their life stages need timely information about the transport services that are best suited to their needs and ability.

At some stage in their life, an older person may need greater assistance to access services. This may be through accessible design of transport services, targeted information, seamless interchanges between services and modes of transport or extra consideration on customer safety. All of these considerations help improve the overall transport experience.





## Accessible for all customers

Accessible pedestrian infrastructure is important for connecting older people with transport services. Older customers must be able to physically access train stations, bus stops, light rail stops and ferry wharves. Improvements in access and connections to community services and facilities, such as hospitals, allied health care services and shopping centres will work to benefit all customers utilising transport services.

Even where physical accessibility to train stations, bus stops, light rail stops and ferry wharves meets accessibility requirements for older customers, these services may not reflect the travel demand patterns of older customers who typically travel in off-peak hours and to and from destinations not typically prioritised in routes that primarily service commuter travel.

Accessibility can be achieved through the adoption of universal design principles that remove physical barriers to access and create buildings, products and environments that are usable by people of all abilities. Broad accessibility principles should, however, include more than just physical access to premises and conveyances. Universal design requires that transport services also provide barrier free (e.g. step free) access for people who have vision, hearing or cognitive impairments.

## Whole of journey accessibility

Connectivity of public transport services and assisted transport services is critical to older people in all life stages.

An accessible transport system can be thought of as a series of multi-modal integrated transport systems and services. It involves barrier free access to:

- the pedestrian environment
- the different modes of transport
- the road network.

Many older customers will use all three parts of the system: either as public transport users, drivers or passengers in cars, or as pedestrians. As these services become more seamless and connected, travel becomes easier for customers with specific needs, including older people.

## Reduction in transport disadvantage

Transport for NSW recognises the significant transport disadvantage older customers may face as they age. Transport disadvantage may arise from a number of factors including poor access to infrastructure, low income, geographical isolation, high cost of alternative transport services such as point to point transport providers, lack of confidence and concerns for personal safety.

Reducing transport disadvantage requires a multi-faceted approach, ensuring continued affordability of services and providing support services for frail, older customers who are unable to use mass transit public transport services.

## Development of partnerships

Locally, councils and community organisations are well placed to develop and implement initiatives that best suit their local communities. State-based tools and planning instruments assist with implementing programs and policies that meet state-based policy commitments and priorities.

While the State Government is responsible for the delivery of transport services, local government has a critical but often under-acknowledged role in facilitating transport solutions that can enable mobility for all people within their community.

Planning and design of local neighbourhoods influence traffic management and pedestrian environments, and provides for bus stops, footpaths and kerbside infrastructure, parklands, recreational facilities and important social infrastructure such as libraries.



## Innovative solutions to accessibility

Transport for NSW is committed to developing innovative and practical solutions aimed at reducing or minimising transport disadvantage. Innovation may not always involve technology solutions, as the recent trial of a flexible bus service from Tottenham to Dubbo demonstrates (see Case Study).

Assistive devices and services have always been crucial to overcoming barriers for older customers and those with a disability. As technology advances, Transport for NSW will continue to identify opportunities to harness these new tools to improve access for all our customers. While our customer

base, including seniors, are increasing their use of technology to access and customise transport service options, many older customers are on the wrong side of the digital divide. It is therefore important to ensure that information is still available in a number of formats to address different needs and abilities.

Transport for NSW will foster a culture of openness to innovation and change, looking interstate and abroad for best practice approaches to accessibility. Transport for NSW will also strive to be a leader in engineering creative solutions, particularly in a rural and regional setting.

### Case Study

#### Tottenham – Dubbo bus service trial:

In the first of its kind in NSW, Transport for NSW is trialling a public bus service from the small town of Tottenham in the state's west 150 kilometres down the road to the larger regional city of Dubbo.

The service is tailor-made for Tottenham and the pickup and drop off points can change depending on passengers' needs.

This flexible, weekly bus service was developed in response to community representations. The passengers on the service tend to be local older residents and pensioners who requested the public transport service in order to maintain independence and mobility.

*"Words can't describe how I feel; it's going to change my life and many older people in the town ... It's just being able to get out and have a life and be able to have some sort of social life; that is what the bus is going to do for me and I believe it's going to do that for a lot of other people in town". – Local resident.*



## 4. Actions to support older people's mobility

In developing the Older Persons Mobility Plan we talked to older people about what they needed from transport services at different stages of their ageing. The statements used in the Action Plan reflect what they told us.

### 4.1 Keeping active and connected with my community

As an older person, keeping active and connected with my community means:

- My public transport trips are seamless and accessible.
- I am aware that I can get where I need to go safely by walking, cycling and public transport information.
- I do not experience barriers to getting around by public transport.
- Public transport and facilities meet my needs as I age.
- I can continue to drive for as long as I am medically fit and competent to drive safely, but I am not car dependent.

#### What transport has achieved so far

##### Better Infrastructure and Fleet

The Transport Access Program has delivered upgraded facilities to improve accessibility and benefits to get customers to, from and around public transport interchanges. In the 2018 NSW Budget the NSW Government confirmed a further \$882 million would be spent on improving access to public transport, boosting NSW's investment in public transport accessibility to \$2 billion since 2011.

The NSW Government has delivered more than 30,000 additional weekly public transport services since 2011.

Transport for NSW has continued to invest in new, low-floor buses to support easier access for older customers.

Transport for NSW continues to deliver new signage across the transport network that is consistent and easy-to-follow to make public transport easier for customers to use, particularly when changing modes and taking unfamiliar journeys.

The Country Public Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme provided subsidies to support the construction or upgrade of bus stop and other minor transport infrastructure needs for any transport services contracted by Transport for NSW across country NSW. The grants provided opportunities to improve the accessibility of bus transport for customers in rural communities.

Quiet carriages have been introduced on Intercity train services that provide a quiet environment for customers when travelling longer distances.

Commissioning of the New Inner Harbour Ferries as part of the Fleet Delivery Program to provide new ferries for more comfortable, reliable and efficient journeys with better accessibility features to meet the needs of older customers.

## What transport has achieved so far

### Walkable Communities

Sydney's Walking Future was released to promote walking by connecting people to places through safe, convenient walking networks through engagement with partners across government, councils and non-government organisations.

Delivery of the Transport for NSW Active Transport (Walking and Cycling) Program, which provides funding in collaboration with local government to target improvements in walking and cycling in the areas where most short trips occur. The NSW Government has invested record amounts in walking and cycling infrastructure, committing more than \$250m to cycling and walking upgrades over the six years from 2011 to 2018.

The Active Transport Program provides investment through 100 per cent and partnership funding arrangements. Programs improved walking through the delivery of improved pedestrian crossing facilities and enhanced connections.

The Active Transport Program provides funding to local councils to develop Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and walking infrastructure including signalised and non-signalised crossings, kerb ramps and pedestrian refuges.

### Affordable and Safe Transport

Transport for NSW continues to offer eligible seniors concession fares on public transport which are the most generous in Australia.

Roads and Maritime Services continues to offer holders of a pensioner concession card exemption from fees for driver licencing and driver testing and the registration and motor vehicle tax for one vehicle per person.

Transport for NSW has produced a comprehensive communication and education resource, *On the road 65Plus*. It provides information regarding health and road user abilities, information on safer driving habits, walking safely, using public transport safely, licensing options, planning to retire from full-time driving, choosing a safer vehicle, other transport options and using mobility scooters safely.

## Future actions for Transport for NSW

### Better Infrastructure and Fleet

Continue to ensure that the needs of older customers are considered for major capital projects such as new rolling stock, fleet, stations and other built environment connections by consulting with them about their needs.

Engage with and communicate best practice to local governments to support infrastructure for walkability, safety and transport for seniors in local communities relating to key facilities, such as bus stops.

Work collaboratively with local governments to determine if existing policy and program settings best reflect the growing ageing population in terms of walkable infrastructure and safe shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists.

Ensure that transport operators provide facilities for older customers, such as toilets, waiting areas and seating.

## Future actions for Transport for NSW

Ensure future toilet design takes into consideration the needs of older customers, such as adequate space for walking aids and other ambulant mobility devices.

Explore opportunities to minimise platform gaps and height differences to enable better access to and from transport vehicles for older customers.

Improve operational guidance on bus stop design and driver training to make boarding and alighting of buses easier and safer for older customers.

Improve access for older customers to recreational facilities, such as boat ramps and jetties, by developing and making available a detailed database of facilities to allow better journey planning and access to recreational boating.

Continue to work with councils in preparing Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans and Place-Based Planning with a systematic approach to result in effective infrastructure improvements and identify any opportunities for funding.

Promote the use of the Commonwealth's 'Whole of Journey' guide for accessibility to local government and infrastructure agencies.

## Better Information and Training

Seek opportunities to work with peak cycling bodies, bicycle user groups and bicycle training providers to promote road safety with cycling skills and confidence training courses for older customers.

Support local government in identifying opportunities to deliver improved outcomes for older persons transport mobility, such as educational material and walking maps through the use of the Transport for NSW Active Transport (Walking and Cycling) Program.

Review pathways for the transition from driver to non-driver beyond the licensing system. In particular, determine opportunities to offer more transport options for older people to best suit their needs.

In collaboration with NSW TrainLink, explore opportunities to further promote leisure travel packages targeted towards both domestic and international older travellers.

Improve the targeting of information on safer driving and transition to non-driving, including consideration of Point to Point travel training opportunities. Investigate overseas best practice examples such as Mobility Centres in the United Kingdom.

Continue to review campaigns such as "Ride to Live" to measure the effectiveness amongst at risk audiences including older motorcycle riders and drivers.

## Better Services

Improve access to off-peak services to enhance available transport options and connections for older customers.

Continue trials of flexible and demand responsive services in metropolitan and rural settings. Monitor the benefits of these services for older customers and conduct consultation where applicable.

Finalise and implement the Transport Disability Incentives and Subsidies with a view to increasing transport options for eligible frail older customers.



## Future actions for Transport for NSW

Address geographical transport disadvantage in parts of rural and regional NSW through delivery of NSW Community Transport Services.

Monitor Opal Gold Card usage data to better understand the travel patterns and potential service needs of older customers.

Design better rural transport services to provide access to key destinations such as hospitals and medical centres.

Aligned with the *State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 – 2038*, TfNSW will deliver protected cycleways, pedestrian infrastructure and non-infrastructure that will enable and encourage active transport

## 4.2 Staying Safe

As an older person, staying safe means:

- I can feel safe and confident accessing and using transport to get around.
- I have alternatives if I am no longer medically fit and competent to drive safely.
- I am confident that my transport provider and station staff prioritise my safety.

### What transport has achieved so far

#### Better Infrastructure and Fleet

The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan 2014-16 was developed by the Centre for Road Safety to facilitate the improvement of road and footpath infrastructure to improve safety and access for pedestrians. Initiatives include trialling new countdown timers and the development of pedestrian friendly signal phasing.

Delivery of improved safety measures through programs such as the CCTV Upgrade Project and Station Refresh Program to improve lighting levels at stations and replacement of CCTV cameras with improved functionality and image quality across rail, bus, light rail and ferry services.

#### Affordable and Safe Transport

The Road Safety Plan 2021 continues to target safety at locations with a high pedestrian crash history through the implementation of infrastructure treatments.

Training programs have been developed for bus drivers, customer service officers on trains, drivers of community transport and other point to point service providers in assisting older customers to use their services safely.

#### Better Information and Training

Through the Local Government Road Safety Program, programs have been developed based on crash data and road safety issues affecting individual areas. This has resulted in pedestrian awareness campaigns that target drivers through print media and radio, and presentations to older road users to help older pedestrians understand their risks, refresh their knowledge, and provide advice.

## Future actions for Transport for NSW

### Affordable and Safe Transport

Building on the *Pedestrian Safety Action Plan 2014-16*, explore the opportunity to expand the information being delivered, especially through the Local Government Road Safety Program, to older road users and people with disabilities such as those with a vision impairment and hearing loss.

Monitor new and emerging mobility devices that become available to the market and look to ensure appropriate safety messaging is developed.

Encourage and incentivise older drivers to purchase newer, safer vehicles that include crash avoidance technologies.

Analyse data regarding slips, trips and falls of older customers across the transport network and determine future actions to reduce occurrences at key locations.

Investigate the use of technology and new smartphone applications to provide additional safety measures, such as longer traffic light phasing for pedestrian crossings.

Continue to work with the Australian Government regarding implementation of the national labelling scheme and safety standards for mobility scooters to encourage safe use on public transport and in pedestrian environments.

Investigate the provision of day return trips in rural and regional NSW to assist with safe and affordable journeys.

### Better Information and Training

Develop, test and conduct a broad courtesy campaign targeted at the use of priority seating on transport services.

Use local government road safety education activities as an opportunity to seek feedback from older customers on the adequacy of local pedestrian and road infrastructure.

Collaborate with local government to implement measures at identified locations with a higher proportion of older pedestrians, potentially including lower speed limits, traffic calming measures, and signal improvements.

### Improved Customer Service

Undertake further research on the customer experience for older customers on the bus network. Define customer needs and develop recommendations for customer service improvements.

Incorporate research findings about barriers and fears, such as falls and appropriate deployment of ramps, experienced by older customers in bus driver sensitivity training and other frontline customer service training.

Provide dementia awareness training to frontline customer service staff.

### Better Infrastructure and Fleet

Work with and encourage local councils to standardise design and signage for bus stops through the development of Bus Stop Guidelines and potential co-funding arrangements.

### 4.3 Being informed

As an older person, staying informed means:

- I can have access to the information I need about transport services.
- The information I need during my journey, such as stops, station and wharf identification is provided.
- I am aware of how technology can enhance my journey.
- I can continue to receive information if I don't use technology.

#### What transport has achieved so far

##### Better Information and Training

The transportnsw.info website, 131 500 InfoLine, mobile website, Interactive Voice Response and Twitter continues to be a key source of information about public transport across NSW.

Transport for NSW continues to improve the transport.info website, for example through incorporating trip planning for NSW TrainLink services, to make it easier for older customers to plan their journey.

Continued delivery of First Stop Transport and Travel Training programs to support new and infrequent older public transport customers.

Delivery and improvement of travel planning transport apps that can be downloaded on smartphones and tablets from the App Store (Apple devices) and Google Play (Android devices), such as the Opal Travel app and other real-time travel apps.

Continuing to partner with app designers to provide better customer services and information for people with limited mobility to confidently use public transport in NSW.

#### Future actions for Transport for NSW

##### Better Information and Training

Continue to include new transport technology, including real-time apps in the Tech Savvy Seniors Program (partnership between Department of Family and Community Services and Telstra).

Expand the awareness of Travel Training through agencies such as Service NSW and other groups, such as local non-profit organisations that may benefit people living with dementia and other mobility constraints.

Continue to monitor new technology such as developments in Artificial Intelligence and assess how it may assist transport in better meeting the needs of older customers.

Use data captured through existing customer satisfaction surveys to better understand the public transport journeys of older customers and identify opportunities to improve customer information and uptake of new technologies.

Investigate systems that enable access to mobility as a service for older customers without access to a smart phone or computer.

Develop integrated communications about licensing, safer transport and health factors and driving for older road users and their family/carers. This may include information regarding appropriate fitting of child restraints.

Involve older customers in user testing of new technology based products and services such as passenger information displays.

## Future actions for Transport for NSW

Improve the clarity and legibility of public transport timetable information published as printed documents or online for download.

Partner with community information, service centres such as local libraries, Service NSW centres and other service providers to distribute information about local and regional transport services, and alternative transportation options.

Continue to promote 131 500 as an alternative for older customers who do not have access to digital transport service information.

When testing wayfinding signage, include consideration of dementia as a human factor and include older people in the testing process





## 4.4 Maintaining independence

As an older person, maintaining independence means:

- I can continue to use public transport services as I age.
- I can have the ability to plan for my transport needs, both now and in the future.
- I have access to suitable alternatives to private car use.
- My public transport options can be tailored to my needs.
- I have a say in the type of point to point and Community Transport services I access.

### What transport has achieved so far

#### Affordable and Safe Transport

Continued delivery of the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme, which provides fare subsidy for eligible NSW residents who are unable to use public transport because of a qualifying severe and permanent disability and continue incentives to the taxi industry to increase the supply of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis.

Investment in Point to Point reforms to raise the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme cap from \$30 to \$60 per journey; reduce the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi licence fees in metro areas to zero and expand the current Wheelchair Accessible Taxi interest free loan scheme.

Roads and Maritime Services have continued to administer the Mobility Parking Scheme to improve social inclusion and participation in the community for people with mobility disabilities.

Continued delivery and investment in the NSW Community Transport Program to assist with local transport solutions for older customers who are frail and their carers.

#### Improved Transport Service Options

Introduction of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* which will encourage innovative new services to better meet customers' needs, as well as better use of existing resources.

Continued roll out of the Centralised Trip and Allocation Booking System to all contracted community transport service providers to assist in managing their resources more efficiently through facilitating real-time tracking for their vehicles, automated confirmation and reminders to customers of trip bookings and better manage cancellations.

The older person licensing scheme has been revised to assess the effectiveness of support provided to older customers to reduce the reliance on driving, including providing guidance to health professionals in relation to fitness to drive and options available.

Continued to explore partnerships between community transport providers, taxi companies and other point to point providers to transport meet community transport needs outside of operating hours.

A trial of two prototype vehicles amongst community transport service providers across NSW has been conducted to seek customer feedback on the design comfort of the vehicles and the outcomes are currently being evaluated for future consideration in the Transport for NSW Bus Procurement Panel.

## Future actions for Transport for NSW

### Improved Transport Service Options

Continue development of new service options that overcome barriers associated with the long distance to the bus stop or train station and poor pedestrian accessibility, including 'hub and spoke' services and flexible demand responsive services.

Seek opportunities to increase uptake of point to point and mobility as a service products by Seniors, including through special discounts and incentives from service providers.

Introduce more on-demand services (community transport, local/shuttle bus) to and from public transport hubs, to encourage older customers to use public transport services.

In alignment with the roll out of the Centralised Trip and Allocation Booking System, establish better partnerships within communities and with other agencies such as NSW Health to assist community transport. In some areas, community transport may be under-utilised or there may be better ways to ensure that the demand for community transport trips by older customers can be serviced by local community transport operators.

Following the trials of flexible transport in Western NSW (Tottenham to Dubbo and Bourke to Brewarrina), investigate opportunities to expand public transport options for isolated and disadvantaged communities.

Explore the feasibility of sensors or wearable technology that can assist transport staff to identify customers that require additional assistance.

### Affordable and Safe Transport

Explore alternative ways for travel training to be provided that is relevant to older customers at the local level following evaluation of initial roll out.

Continue to support programs for Aboriginal communities, such as assistance with transport to funerals.

### Better Information and Training

Undertake further research on the customer experience for older customers on the bus network. Define customer needs and develop recommendations for customer service improvements.

### Better Infrastructure and Fleet

Collaborate with Local Government to influence planning processes associated with the design of roadside infrastructure, such as bus stops, footpaths and kerb ramps to consider the needs of older customers and makes it easier for them to access public transport.

## 5. Indicators, monitoring and evaluation

### 5.1 Accountabilities

The Transport Social Policy Team, within the Freight, Strategy and Planning Division in Transport for NSW will continue to monitor the implementation of each of the actions in this Plan in consultation with the relevant area in the Transport cluster.

A 'customer focus' approach to improving accessibility and maintaining mobility will be used as a measure of success for action items in the Older Persons Transport and Mobility Action Plan.

Reporting on implementation progress of actions will be undertaken through the Annual Report. Reporting and progress will also be reflected through the NSW Ageing Strategy and updates presented to the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing on a regular basis.

### 5.2 Measurement

While the growth in accessible transport services and infrastructure will be key measures of how well the transport network in NSW can support an ageing population, we will also use available data to measure impacts on journeys made by older customers.

Data which has been collected from Opal Card use can help us understand older customers travel preferences, by transport mode and time of day. It will also help us understand the impacts of accessible infrastructure improvements on the number of trips made by concession card users.

Customers are regularly surveyed about their experience on four public transport modes – train, bus, ferry and light rail – and by road and pedestrian trips. This survey data will be disaggregated by age to

ensure that satisfaction of older customers continues to improve in general, and in comparison with all other age groups.

We will also closely monitor the uptake of innovative service models, such as flexible and demand responsive services by older customers.

At present there are some short-comings in data collected from rural and regional customers. The emergence of new technologies is rapidly transforming the analysis of travel activity and transport modelling. Therefore, we will measure both improvements in relevant data collection from areas of NSW outside the Opal footprint, as well as the findings on rural and regional travel by older customers.



## 6. Appendix 1 – Policy Framework

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### 6.1 NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020

The NSW Ageing Strategy is a whole of government and whole of community strategy that describes how the NSW Government is working with people throughout their lives to age well and to remove barriers to continued participation.<sup>1</sup>

The Ageing Strategy seeks to assist government, the private sector and communities in NSW to better prepare for, and respond to, the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population and sets out actions that will contribute to the vision that:

*“People in NSW experience the benefits of living longer and enjoy opportunities to participate in, contribute to and be included in their communities.”*

Consultation on the Ageing Strategy identified that ‘being able to get around on a daily basis for as long as possible’ is one of the most important things for people in NSW as they get older.<sup>2</sup>

The Ageing Strategy identifies high level initiatives under five priorities related to health, financial security, housing, transport and inclusive communities. Priority 4: Getting Around outlines key activities that are led by Transport for NSW towards ensuring that:

*“older people in NSW can travel safely and appropriately to participate in social and economic life and access services.”<sup>3</sup>*

The Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan seeks to uphold the principles that underpin the NSW Ageing Strategy and adhere to the values that guide planning and service delivery of Transport for NSW. It recognises that being able to access public and community transport helps maintain mobility and independence for people no longer driving. The ability of older people to move around their communities and access services is vital to securing their independence and dignity.<sup>4</sup>

More details can be found at:

**<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/participation-and-inclusion/the-nsw-ageing-strategy-2016-2020>**

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<sup>1</sup> The NSW Department of Family and Community Services is the lead agency responsible for the NSW Ageing Strategy. Partnering government agencies include, but are not limited to the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, NSW Department of Planning and Environment (including the Greater Sydney Commission), NSW Health, NSW Finance and Services and the NSW Department of Industry.

<sup>2</sup> NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020, p 16. <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/media/releases/archive/helping-people-live-longer-and-better-lives>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=382829>

<sup>4</sup> The Council of the Ageing NSW 50+ report, <http://www.cotansw.com.au/MediaPDFs/2015-50-plus-Report.pdf> Executive summary, page 3



## 7. Supporting Research

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The development of the Plan has been informed by research into the travel needs and transport use of older customers along with older people's use of technology. Key findings from each of the research initiatives are outlined below.

### Older Persons Transport Survey 2015

The Older Persons Transport Survey 2015 involved an online survey of Seniors Card holders supplemented by a computer-assisted telephone interview survey. A total of 2,132 people aged 60 years and over were surveyed, comprising 1,308 telephone interviews and 824 online responses. Respondents were recruited from across the greater Sydney metropolitan area and included a good representation of age, gender, pensioners and non-pensioners.

Key findings included:

#### Most older people drive regularly

Consistent with other similar transport surveys, the vast majority of older people are regular car drivers. In this survey 80% of the respondents were car drivers including 77% who reported travelling by car as a driver at least once a week or more.

The proportion of older people who reported that they drive a car at least once a week declined with age, especially among women drivers.

#### Most older people are not planning for when they can no longer drive

Overall 61% of drivers had not made plans or considered what they would do when they were no longer able to drive. This proportion of drivers decreased only slightly with age.

#### Most older people are also public transport users

Although a high proportion of older people are regular car drivers, a similar proportion of older people (75%) also use a mode of public transport at least once every two months.

For all age groups the most commonly reported purpose of travel by public transport was recreation, dining and entertainment suggesting that enabling access to public transport services for older people has economic benefits for the broader community.

Older people who used public transport travelled predominantly during the weekday off-peak period and on weekend days.

#### Older people who use public transport use buses most often

Buses and trains were the most commonly used modes of public transport.

People who used buses used them more regularly (once a week or more) than train users.

#### The proportion of people with a pensioner concession card increases with age

Of the sub-group of public transport users, 55% had a pensioner concession card. The proportion of people who had a pensioner concession card increased with age from 24% of 60 to 64 year olds to 75% of 75 to 79 year olds.

The majority of public transport users indicated that they could tolerate an increase in the daily price of a Seniors Card/Pensioner Excursion Ticket up to \$3.80 without changing their current travel routines.

## **Improving public transport**

People were asked to nominate a main concern. The issues most frequently identified as a main concern were safety (identified by 11% of all respondents), frequency (10%), reliability (8%), followed by facilities, distance to, and connections between, services (each 7%).

## **Reasons for not using public transport**

The most commonly cited reasons for why older people choose not to use public transport were convenience, distance of the service from home or destination, making connections to other transport and safety. Not being able to travel whenever you want, longer travelling time or difficulty with carrying packages were the main issues related to convenience.

## **Community transport users are mostly women aged over 70 years**

There were 108 respondents (5%) who used community transport. Of these, the largest group were women aged 80 years and over. Community transport was mostly frequently used for medical appointments.

## **Only a small percentage of older people use subsidised taxi services**

The majority of respondents (84%) used taxis less than once every two months. Only 3% of the total survey sample (71 people) was eligible for the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme.

## **Transport use by older people in rural and regional areas**

The Council of the Ageing NSW 50+ Survey 2015 sought to provide insights into how older people find information and how they 'get around' through a series of consumer reference groups, polls and focus groups. The key findings of the Council of the Ageing NSW 50+ Survey 2015 show that the difficulty experienced by older

people in getting around was generally greater in regional areas compared to metropolitan Sydney.

Other key findings included:

- The main ways of getting around were very different between respondents from metropolitan locations (Sydney) and non-metropolitan locations. In rural areas there is less reliance on walking and a greater reliance on private motor vehicle transport.
- There is a very uneven use of public transport across the eight regions in NSW – reflecting the differences in availability. There is far less public transport available in the non-metropolitan regions – particularly the North Coast and Western regions.
- The proportion of respondents who rated ease of getting around as very easy or easy was lower for those living in non-metropolitan regions. Getting to shops and health services was less easy the further respondents lived away from the Sydney East/Inner suburbs region.
- For identified personal barriers to getting around by region, three barriers showed differences in incidence based on the region in which respondents lived. Those identifying 'living in an isolated area' and 'can't afford to get out and about' increased the further away from Sydney East/Inner suburbs that they lived.
- The most frequently identified physical barriers to getting around related to footpaths, which were identified by about 50% of respondents living in metropolitan regions and by about 70% of respondents living in non-metropolitan regions. The next most commonly reported physical barriers were associated with parking, toilets, lighting and seating.

## Older people's use of technology

In the Council of the Ageing NSW 50+ Consumer Survey 2015, all respondents were competent using the internet as the survey was self-administered online.<sup>5</sup>

Key findings included:

- Paying bills and shopping were activities engaged in by more than 60% of respondents despite the often quoted concern with transacting on the internet.
- Across most activities, the use of the internet declined for older respondents, however the rate of decline varied. Emailing and researching remained fairly stable, but newspapers, movies and music declined slowly and steadily with age.

- The use of the internet was shown to increase as household income increases. Paying bills and shopping online in particular were activities that increased steeply as household income increased.

Common assumptions that older people find the convenience of smartphones and the 'intuitive' operations of tablets preferable to laptops and desktops are not supported by the responses to the survey. The use of tablets declined from about 50% of respondents in their 50's to about 30% of respondents in their 70's and 80's.

When compared with other NSW and Australian Government customer websites, Seniors rated transportnsw.info as substantially easier to use and find the information they needed than the other sites. The website was rated as having the best utility and efficacy.



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5 Council of the Ageing NSW 50+ Survey 2015

**Transport for NSW invites comments on the Older Persons Transport and Mobility Plan.**

Submissions can be emailed or posted to:

**Email:** [transportsocialpolicy@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:transportsocialpolicy@transport.nsw.gov.au)

**Post:** PO Box K659, Haymarket NSW 1240

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