

Date: Monday, 14 September 2025
Time: 1-3pm
Location: Rototuna Library, 30 North City Road, Hamilton, Waikato 3281
Or ([Online MS Teams](#))

Facilitator: Sarah Gibb, Community Waikato
Note taker: Yvonne Mariano, Waikato Regional Council

Attendees in person:

Kate Leach, Waikato Regional Council
Desiree Brown, 4H Community Trust Board/Te Kuiti Community House
Gesan Naidoo, Age Concern Waikato
Ian Angus, Friends of Morrinsville Community Charitable Trust
John Petry, Friends of Morrinsville Community Charitable Trust
Alastair Black, Gray Matter
Vinish Prakash, Gray Matter
Adam Jackson, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Waikato
Khaliah Tapu, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Waikato
Paul Doelman, Morrinsville Health Shuttle
Val & L Sparks, Paeroa Volunteer Drivers - Paeroa Community Support Trust
Jan Meredith, Paeroa Volunteer Drivers
Terry Ryan, Raglan District Community Vehicle Trust
Elsbeth Ryan, Raglan District Community Vehicle Trust
Peter Boyce, South Waikato Community Health Transport Inc
Ann Deihl, South Waikato Community Health Transport Inc
John Wadey, South Waikato Community Health Transport Inc
Rebecca Kingston, Volunteering Waikato

Attendees via Teams:

Jessica Foster, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Waikato
Robyn Driver, Mai Lighthouse
Andrew Gillgren, Mai Lighthouse
Ash Moran, Port Waikato Community Transport Service
Jan Dench, Matamata Community House Shuttle Trust
Cat Sole-Osborne, EmpowerED - Youth Education Centre
Wai Crombie, Waikato/Bay of Plenty Cancer Society Volunteer Driving Service
Tony Marsters, Whitianga Community Services Trust

Purpose: An opportunity to build relationships and share knowledge and information in support of rural transport initiatives and projects in the Waikato region.

Meeting notes:

- 1. Welcome and Introduction:** Sarah opened the meeting with a karakia and requested that Kate Leach, the new Community Transport Lead, briefly introduce herself to the group. She also invited attendees to participate in a roundtable of introductions.

Kate Leach has recently returned to Waikato Regional Council as the Community Transport Lead. She previously worked with the council's public transport team, supporting both Te Huia and regional public transport services before leaving in 2022. Since then, she has gained experience at Hamilton City Council in roles focused on transport strategy, community engagement, and waste education. Having been in her new role for just over a month, Kate is excited to combine her transport and community-focused experience and is looking forward to connecting with communities across the region to learn more about their local community transport services.

- 2. Volunteers and How to Manage them:** Rebecca Kingston, Volunteering Waikato [View presentation by clicking [here](#)]

Background: Recent volunteering trends show that volunteer numbers remain similar to those of 10 years ago, but the volunteer demographic has changed. The largest group of volunteers is now 20 to 29-year-olds, with increasing participation from international students, job seekers, people with disabilities, those experiencing mental health challenges, and neurodiverse individuals.

People volunteer for a variety of reasons, including gaining skills and experience, building confidence, staying connected to their community, and finding a sense of purpose.

Volunteer needs differ across communities, but a common challenge is raising awareness of community organisations, as many people recognise organisation names but are unfamiliar with the services they provide and their impact on the community.

What does Volunteering Waikato do? Volunteering Waikato supports both volunteers and community organisations by promoting volunteer opportunities, connecting people with suitable roles, providing training and resources, helping organisations recruit volunteers, and celebrating the contribution of volunteers. A key message was the importance of organisations clearly communicating who they are, what they do, and the impact they have, as people are more likely to volunteer for a cause they connect with rather than simply filling a vacant role.

Tell your story: People are more likely to volunteer when they understand an organisation's purpose and the difference it makes. Clearly sharing who you help, the problem you address, and the impact volunteers have can help attract volunteers who genuinely connect with your cause and values. Volunteers, particularly younger people, are increasingly looking for opportunities that are meaningful and connected to a larger purpose.

Our Impact Chain: Organisations should clearly communicate their impact and help volunteers understand the "impact chain" between their role, wider community outcomes, and the organisation's overall mission.

7 Doors to finding new volunteers in your community: To attract new volunteers, organisations are encouraged to leverage word of mouth through existing volunteers, strengthen relationships with local businesses and community groups, engage with people who have benefited from their services, and maintain a visible presence within their communities. Clearly sharing the organisation's purpose, impact, and volunteer opportunities can help build stronger connections with potential volunteers and encourage greater community involvement.

Draw your Town: Organisations are encouraged to map out potential volunteer sources within their community and identify practical opportunities to connect with and recruit volunteers through a variety of networks and relationships.

Nurture the Journey: A positive volunteer experience starts from the first point of contact. Organisations can improve volunteer retention by making it easy to sign up, communicating warmly and promptly, helping volunteers feel welcome and connected, recognising their contributions, and supporting their personal goals throughout their volunteer journey.

Open Discussion:

- Participants discussed the variety of volunteer roles within their organisations, which extend beyond drivers, coordinators, treasurers, and board or committee members. Age Concern highlighted its volunteers' role in supporting older people experiencing loneliness by matching volunteers with individuals to help reduce social isolation.
- It was discussed the various support roles undertaken by volunteers, including vehicle maintenance, cleaning, record-keeping, and administration. They shared practical challenges around keeping community transport vehicles clean and explored ideas such as using commercial wash services or seeking sponsorship. The conversation also highlighted the importance of recognising and appreciating volunteers, with some organisations providing refreshments and social opportunities as a way of thanking their drivers and fostering a positive volunteer environment.

3. Resolution on the licensing / Regulation Issue: Kate Leach

- Participants were referred to the [NZTA Community Transport Operator Requirements](#) document, which was release in June 2026 and included with the meeting agenda. The document was highlighted as a useful resource for understanding NZTA's expectations around community transport licensing and compliance requirements.
- Providers were encouraged to review the section outlining NZTA's interpretation of licensing requirements for exempt services.

Open Discussion:

- The discussion noted that some uncertainty remains regarding licensing obligations, including requirements for passenger service licences, P endorsements, Certificates of Fitness (CoF), and Certificates of Loading.
- It was clarified that **NZTA is the regulator responsible for compliance and enforcement**, while the Waikato Regional Council's role is limited to funding community transport services and does not include monitoring or enforcing licensing requirements.
- Providers were encouraged to review their individual circumstances and consider including certification costs in future funding applications where appropriate.

- Participants raised questions about licensing requirements referenced in the Community Transport Funding Agreement and whether organisations are required to hold specific licences or certifications to receive funding.
 - The funding agreement requires organisations to confirm they hold any licences or endorsements required for their operations.
 - The Waikato Regional Council does not monitor or enforce licensing compliance; its role is to administer funding.
 - Organisations should determine their own compliance obligations and consider including any certification costs in future funding applications.
 - Providers were reminded to review the NZTA guidance document and ensure they understand the licensing and certification requirements relevant to their services.

4. Update from Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand

- Jessica Foster from Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand's national procurement team, introduced her role in staff and non-emergency patient transport services. She is working with districts across New Zealand to better understand how patient transport is delivered and has identified community transport providers as a vital part of helping people access healthcare appointments. Jessica's aim is to ensure community transport organisations are recognised and included in future transport planning, service delivery, and procurement discussions, while also exploring ways Health New Zealand can better support smaller providers and make procurement processes more accessible. Adam Jackson will remain the main point of contact, with Jessica providing ongoing updates and national-level support as required.
- Adam acknowledged and thanked providers for their patience during the **2026/27 contract renewal process**, which experienced delays due to the implementation of a new contract management system. Providers were advised that all contract renewals have now been issued, and any organisation yet to receive its contract should contact Health New Zealand directly for follow-up.
- He also mentioned that an updated quarterly reporting template has also been introduced to replace more frequent reporting requirements. The new format is intended to simplify the reporting process, and providers were invited to share any feedback or questions to help ensure it meets their needs.

Feedback:

- A concern was raised that the proposed quarterly reporting requirements could place an additional administrative burden on organisations that currently report annually, particularly where the new template may require changes to existing databases and trip-recording processes. Health New Zealand acknowledged the feedback and advised that the potential impacts on organisations' reporting systems and workloads would be taken into consideration.

Open Discussion:

- Val from Paeroa Volunteer Drivers mentioned the challenges faced, particularly during the Christmas season, in supporting hospital discharges and patient transport between Waikato Hospital and Thames when other funded transport services are unavailable. While volunteer drivers are willing to transport patients using their own vehicles, the organisation does not receive funding to cover these additional trips. She identified the impact on patients needing transport home and the difficulty of absorbing these costs without dedicated funding.
- Adam noted that this is an ongoing issue and advised that further investigation would be undertaken to identify possible solutions.
- Ann and Peter from South Waikato Community Health Transport Inc mentioned that they are required to report client ethnicity but do not receive this information from hospital referral forms. As a result, organisations must collect the information themselves, which can be difficult and may affect reporting accuracy.
- Health New Zealand acknowledged that while ethnicity data is useful for reporting purposes, organisations are not expected to provide information they do not have. Alternative options, such as using NHI-linked data where available, may be explored by Health NZ to help address gaps in ethnicity reporting.

5. WRC Community Transport Update: Kate Leach

- **Community Transport Fund Policy Review:** Alastair Black and Vinish Prakash, Gray Matter [View presentation by clicking [here](#)]

Background: Kate stated that the Community Transport Fund has grown significantly over the past four years, the fund is now \$500,000, while the policy governing the fund has remained largely unchanged. As a result, Waikato Regional Council has initiated an independent review of the policy to ensure it remains effective and it continues to meet the needs of community transport providers. Consultants from Gray Matter were engaged to lead the review and gather feedback from community transport providers as part of the consultation process.

Alastair and Vinish from Gray Matter briefly introduced themselves and explained that the review process aims to ensure the Community Transport Fund remains easy to access, aligned with community transport needs, and transparent in how funding is allocated. They noted that feedback from community transport operators is a key part of the review, helping to ensure the policy remains effective and supports those delivering services on the ground.

- **By community, for community:** Gray Matter has found that the current Community Transport Fund policy recognises the value of community transport services, but there is an opportunity to make its purpose and objectives clearer. They are seeking feedback from providers to better understand what is working well and where improvements can be made to inform future policy development.

- **Next Steps:** Gray Matter advised that while the current Community Transport Fund recognises the value of community transport services, there is an opportunity to better reflect the broader community and social benefits these services provide. Feedback gathered so far indicates that community transport contributes far beyond health-related trips, and the review aims to ensure these wider impacts are clearly reflected in the policy.

They have identified that Waikato is performing well in this area compared to other regions and has now moved into the stakeholder engagement phase. Community transport providers will be invited to contribute further feedback through surveys, written submissions, and follow-up discussions, with a draft policy expected to be presented to Waikato Regional Council in November and final adoption anticipated in December.

- **Provider Input:** Gray Matter sought feedback from providers on the future direction of the Community Transport Fund, focusing on sustainability, fund priorities, the role of community transport, and whether the current policy supports providers' needs and objectives. It was noted that the review relates specifically to the fund's policy and accountability framework.

Feedback:

- Kate clarified that the Community Transport Fund is funded through Waikato Regional Council rates, with contributions collected from residents across the Waikato region and pooled into a dedicated fund to support community transport services. The fund is administered by Waikato Regional Council and is separate from district council funding arrangements.

Open Discussion relating to Provider Input Questions:

What does sustainable community transport look like to you?

- Desiree from 4H Community Trust Board/Te Kuiti Community House mentioned that she is unable to provide feedback on behalf of their organization without wider consultation. It was confirmed that organisations could discuss the questions with their boards or trustees and submit a collective response during the consultation period. This opportunity was also extended to all attendees.
- Terry from Raglan District Community Vehicle Trust sought clarification on the meaning of 'sustainable community transport.' It was explained that sustainability extends beyond financial viability and includes ensuring services can continue to meet changing community needs, maintain capacity, and remain effective over the long term. The discussion highlighted that sustainability encompasses the overall resilience and future success of community transport services, not just funding considerations.
- Participants noted that greater support for capital costs, such as vehicle replacement, would improve the long-term sustainability of community transport services. Gray Matter acknowledged this feedback and advised that expanding eligibility for capital costs is being considered as part of the policy review.

- Participants identified that sustainable community transport requires both the ability to meet community transport needs when they arise and the flexibility to use funding in ways that best support service delivery. Suggestions included providing less restrictive funding, adopting outcome-focused measures rather than prescriptive requirements, and recognising the additional costs faced by rural and more isolated communities.
- Providers also shared the complexities of coordinating transport services, including managing multiple vehicles, supporting hospital appointments and discharges, and providing specialist services where no alternative transport options exist. The discussion reinforced the vital role community transport organisations play in filling service gaps and ensuring access to essential services across the region.

What role does community transport play in the wider transport system?

- Participants emphasised that community transport is more than a gap-filling service and is often the only transport option available in many communities. Community transport enables people to access healthcare appointments, essential services, and social activities where public transport is limited or unavailable. Providers noted that these services are heavily reliant on volunteer support and play a vital role in connecting people to their communities and maintaining their independence.

Does the current policy allow you to deliver your current goals and priorities?

- Participants identified opportunities to improve the Community Transport Fund policy by better recognising the outcomes and community benefits delivered by transport providers. Feedback highlighted the need for greater flexibility in funding, consideration of capital expenses such as vehicle replacement, and recognition of the additional challenges faced by rural and remote communities. The review team advised that the policy review is intended to strengthen and clarify the fund's purpose, ensuring the value of community transport services is clearly articulated and supported into the future.
 - Providers emphasised the importance of a policy that reflects the full impact of community transport services, supports long-term sustainability, and aligns with wider funding frameworks to simplify funding applications and reporting requirements.
 - Sarah from Community Waikato commented to include support within the policy for collaborative initiatives that benefit the wider community transport sector. This could include funding for research, planning, investigations, or sector-wide projects that help identify future opportunities and shared solutions. It was noted that collaborative activities, such as the Community Transport Symposium, currently rely on sourcing funding from multiple partners rather than being supported through the fund itself.
- ❖ Gray Matter advised that a survey will be sent to each organisation, with approximately two weeks provided for responses. Organisations will have the option of completing the survey online or submitting a PDF response. Providers were also encouraged to identify aspects of the current policy that are working well, in addition to suggesting improvements. Follow-up phone calls may be conducted to discuss feedback in more detail, with a draft policy expected to be developed in November before progressing to adoption in December.

- **Grant Fund Opening for FY 2026/2027 Update**

Kate stated that the next Community Transport Fund application round will be delayed until **February** to allow time for the policy review to be completed. She mentioned that the future timing and structure of funding rounds may change depending on the review outcomes. Providers will continue to receive regular updates throughout the process, including details on the revised policy, funding arrangements, and any impacts on future applications.

Open Discussion:

- Kate touched briefly on Council Amalgamation due to a question raised about the future of rural transport funding. She noted that there is currently no clear guidance on what changes, if any, will occur, as the amalgamation is not scheduled until 2028 and many details remain undecided. In the meantime, funding arrangements will continue as usual, with ongoing advocacy to secure and grow funding levels by demonstrating the increasing demand for community transport services through reporting and evidence provided by operators.

6. Other Matters

Funding Update: Sarah from Community Waikato provided a funding update on the Lottery Fund and the Meridian Decarbonisation Fund.

- **The Lottery Fund** has a new funding programme has been introduced with for funding rounds per year, including a current round closing at the end of September. Community transport organisations can apply under Community Support Services and may also be eligible to apply under Community Projects, with one application permitted in each stream within a 12-month period. The new system allows organisations to reapply within 12 months without waiting for a full year.

Sarah clarified that Community transport organisations can apply for operating costs through the Community Support Services funding stream, while the Community Projects stream can be used for specific initiatives or capital needs, such as vehicle purchases, garaging, or collaborative projects. Organisations may apply to both streams, provided each application is for a different purpose. **To learn more about this visit: [Lottery Fund » Community Matters](#)**

The Meridian Decarbonisation Fund has recently opened and is accepting applications until 12 October. The fund supports organisations looking to transition to fully electric vehicles, providing an opportunity for community transport providers to consider electrifying their fleets, particularly for vehicles used on shorter, local trips.

Actions:

Topic	Discussion	Action & time frame	Person(s) responsible
Community Transport Policy Survey Review	Policy Review Survey	An opportunity for providers to provide feedback and help shape improvements to the current policy and its future direction.	Kate Leach/ Gray Matter
NZTA Community Transport Operator Requirements	NZTA Licensing Guidelines	Providing providers with the opportunity to review the information and become familiar with the requirements.	done
Volunteer drivers and exempt passenger services (Factsheet 18)	NZTA Licensing Guidelines	Providing providers with the opportunity to review the information and become familiar with the requirements.	done
Community Transport Lead	Introduction of the newly appointed lead	Introduce the newly appointed lead to all stakeholders, outlining their role and responsibilities.	done

Upcoming 2026 forum dates:

7 December (to be confirmed)

To learn more about Community Transport, visit: [Home | Waikato Community Transport Forum](#) or <https://www.waikatocommunitytransport.org.nz>

Any queries, please email communitytransport@waikatoregion.govt.nz.



Volunteering Waikato

TE OHU TŪAO O WAIKATO

What does Volunteering Waikato do?

**We help people find the right
volunteer role for their skills
and interests**

**We support community
organisations to recruit, manage,
and retain volunteers**

**We champion and celebrate
volunteering**



TELL YOUR STORY

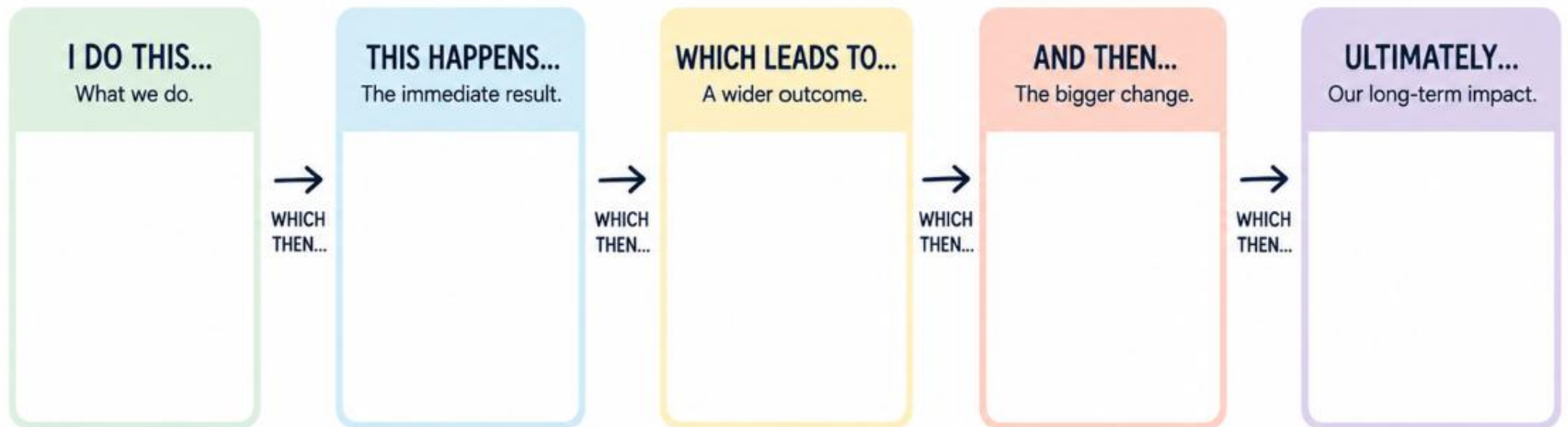
People don't volunteer because you have a vacancy.

They volunteer because they care about something and want to make a difference.



OUR IMPACT CHAIN

Fill in the steps to show how your work creates change.



7 DOORS to finding new volunteers in your community

1

EXISTING VOLUNTEERS



- Ask who they know
- Personal invitation
- People like to help when asked

2

LOCAL BUSINESSES



- Employers
- Local shops
- Services
- Ask if they can help you find one person

3

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS



- Clubs
- Churches
- Groups
- Connect through existing networks

4

PLACES WHERE PEOPLE GATHER



- Libraries
- Cafés
- Classes
- Groups
- Be where people connect

5

WHĀNAU



- Families
- Friends
- Carers
- People already connected to your service

6

PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT THE CAUSE



- They've been there
- They understand the impact
- Invite them to be part of the solution

7

THE COMMUNITY



- Noticeboards
- Local paper
- Events
- Markets
- Talk to people

DRAW YOUR TOWN

Put your organisation in the centre.

Who already has relationships with the people we need?

Identify and write in the people, places and groups.

★ Circle **three** doors we could open.

PEOPLE

Who already volunteers?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



PLACES

Where do people gather?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



ORGANISATIONS

Who has relationships with potential volunteers?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



OUR ORGANISATION

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

BUSINESSES

Who employs or connects with people?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



WHĀNAU

Who is already connected to our service?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



COMMUNITY LEADERS

Who do people listen to and trust?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



NURTURE THE JOURNEY

Once someone says yes, give them an experience that makes them want to stay.



Contact Details



www.volunteeringwaikato.org.nz



[volunteering.waikato](https://www.facebook.com/volunteering.waikato)



[volunteeringwaikato](https://www.instagram.com/volunteeringwaikato)



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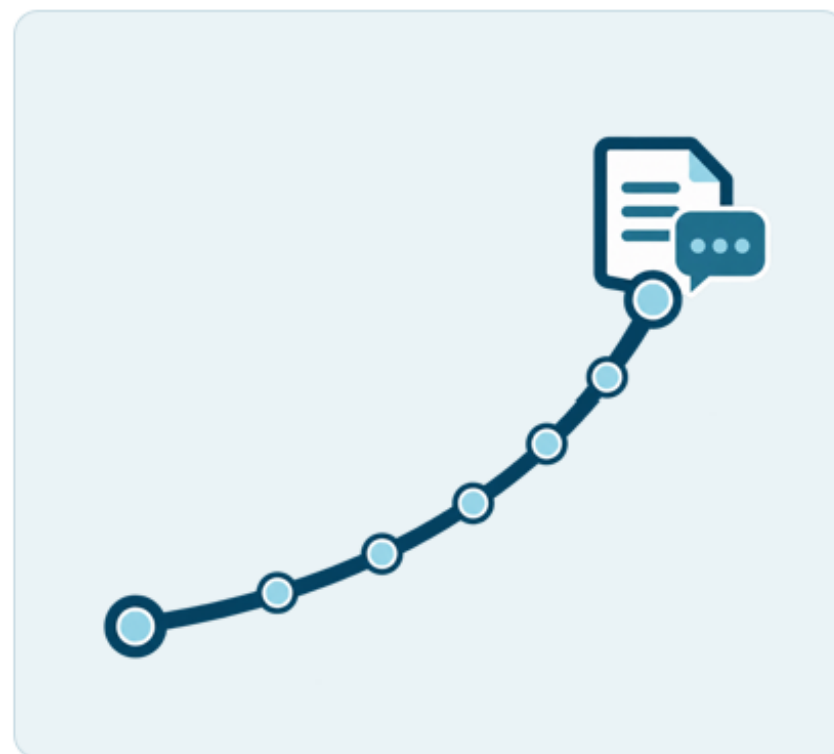
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT FUND POLICY REVIEW

Waikato Community Transport Forum- 14 September 2026



Agenda

■	Introductions	0:05
■	What have we discovered so far?	0:05
■	Provider Input	0:30
■	How will providers help shape the policy?	0:02
■	<u>Pātai</u>	





By community, for community

The current policy recognises the value of community transport.
The opportunity is to make its purpose and outcomes clearer.



What we discovered

The Fund's purpose, intended outcomes and role in the wider transport system are not clearly defined.



Why your experience matters

The policy needs practical settings that reflect how community transport providers operate and the challenges they face.



What we need from you

We are seeking your feedback to understand what works, where the gaps are and how the policy can better support providers.

Next steps

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PHASES



Phase 1
**Strategic Context
and Issues
Assessment**



Phase 2
**Stakeholder
Engagement**

We are here now



Phase 3
**Option
Development and
Workshop**



Phase 4
Draft Policy



Phase 5
Finalise Policy

NEXT STEPS



NOW
Send survey

Survey sent to providers



IN 2 WEEKS
Survey responses and follow-up

Responses are collated and follow-up phone calls begin.



NOVEMBER
Draft policy to WRC



DECEMBER
**RTC and PT Subcommittee
adoption**

Provider Input



We want your input to help shape the Policy

What does sustainable community transport look like to you?

What should the Community Transport Fund enable?

What role does community transport play in the wider transport system?

Does the current policy allow you to deliver on your current goals and priorities?





What does sustainable community transport look like to you?



What would success look and feel like in practice?



What should the Community Transport Fund enable?

What should the fund make possible?





What role does community transport play in the wider transport system?

Where should it fit, connect and add value?





Does the current policy allow you to deliver on your current goals and priorities?



If not, what are the gaps?

How will providers help shape the policy?



ONLINE SURVEY

Survey of community transport providers

 Two-week turnaround

 One response per organisation



FEEDBACK SOUGHT ON



Financial sustainability



Application process



Expansion of services



Vehicles



Volunteers



FOLLOW-UP CALLS

10

providers
contacted
by phone

Patai

Questions and discussion



Pātai?

NEXT STEPS

- NOW**
Send survey
Survey sent to providers
- IN 2 WEEKS**
Survey responses and follow-up
Responses are collated and follow-up phone calls begin.
- NOVEMBER**
Draft policy to WRC
- DECEMBER**
RTC and PT Subcommittee adoption