



**Date:** Monday, 31 March 2025

**Time:** 1-3pm

**Location:** [Online \(MS Teams\)](#)

**Facilitator:** **Amantha Bowen**, Community Transport Lead, Waikato Regional Council

**Note taker:** **Kendra Corey**, Community Transport Coordinator, Waikato Regional Council

**Attendees:** **Desiree Brown**, Te Kuiti 4H Community Trust Board  
**Carol Costello**, Paeroa Community Support Trust  
**Wai Crombie**, Waikato/Bay of Plenty Cancer Society  
**Jan Dench**, Matamata Community Health Shuttle  
**Helen Flynn**, Thames-Coromandel District Council  
**Sarah Gibb**, Community Waikato  
**Brent Gilbert-De Rios**, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora  
**Mel Gutsa McCarty**, Hato Hone St John  
**Jeremy Hall**, MSD – Work & Income Tokoroa  
**Nigel King**, Waikato Regional Council  
**Alicia Leef**, North Waikato Transport Trust  
**Tony Marsters**, Whitianga Community Services Trust  
**Khaliah Tapu**, Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora  
**Shelley Wilson**, Otorohanga Support House Whare Āwhina

**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:** Amantha opened with karakia, followed by a round of introductions.

2. **WRC Community Transport update:** Amantha Bowen  
**Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora RFI: Non-Acute Transport Solutions**

Amantha consulted with forum about feedback toward designing a national non-acute transport solution which may include NTA, a submission was then made which reflects that collective feedback. You can find our [submission](#) on the Waikato Community Transport website.

**Community Transport Symposium** was held on 12 March

- Held on 12 March 2025 – these occur every 3 years, although there is discussion about increasing the frequency – perhaps every 2 years.
- 83 people attended, including Waikato and non-Waikato providers, district council and regional council staff.
- 5 regional councils attended from around the country, as they are looking to learn from us – exciting to see that we are leading the CT conversation nationwide. Amantha working with them to create a strong national network that can grow the conversation and bring more visibility nationally.
- Survey coming out soon [emailed on 11/4] – please respond if you attended. Your response will help us justify the investment and improve future events and symposiums.
- Video recording, graphic recordings, and PowerPoint presentations will be posted the Symposium webpage soon. We will send out a notification once those are up.



### **Climate Change Webinar with Dr Bridget Doran**

Due to space and time restraints, we removed the “Community Transport and Climate Change” talk from the Symposium programme and Bridget will present the content as a webinar on **Wed, 30 April, 1-2pm** on [Microsoft Teams](#). All are welcome! You don’t need a Symposium ticket to attend.

### **Legal Review of Community Transport**

- WRC has undertaken a legal review of the laws and governance around Community Transport, including land transport law, employment law, and others.
- The aim is to solidly define where CT is placed within the law, and clearly understand and what we can and cannot do; for example:
  - will WRC be able to broker contractual relationships with CT providers? If not, what would NZTA need to change in order for this to happen?
  - currently there is a lot of gray space regarding fares. Our region has understood that CT providers can not charge fares but can suggest or recommend a koha amount. However, in other regions, there are groups charging fares and councils contracting them to provide transport for Total Mobility.
- We will share the results with you after the report is finalised in June 2025.

### **Community Transport Fund**

- For last year’s recipients, the end of year reports will be due 11<sup>th</sup> May. In the past, people have struggled to get the required information together so we will set up a time for a conversation and questions around the requirements. This will be organized for mid-late April.
- Council proposed that the fund amount be increased to \$500,000 in 2026 (up from \$200,000 its first year and \$300,000 last year).
- You are invited to [give feedback](#) to your local councillors! While provisionally approved, it’s still under consideration.
- After the legal review in June, we will do a full policy review of the Fund. For example, we understand many applicants would like to have the ability to use the funds towards capital expenditures (Capex). Currently only operational expenses are allowed. This review will consider whether to broaden those requirements.
- The 2026 round is expected to open in Nov-Dec 2025 with funds distributed March 2026 – plenty of notice will be provided once the dates are confirmed.

### **Questions for Amantha**

- Sarah Gibb – have you received feedback from any of the councillors who attended the CT Symposium?
  - Cr Angela Strange had a glowing review and said it was a very valuable experience.
  - Chair Pamela Storey sent a congratulatory email, saying it represented Waikato region well and was inspirational.
- Jeremy Hall – is anyone doing anything in employment-related transport?
  - We’re not aware of anyone in this space as yet, but we are hopeful to see more types of community transport develop, and this was part of the rationale for Council increasing the CT Fund amount to \$500,000.
  - Jeremy mentioned that in his area (Tokoroa and surrounds), there is a dire need for access to transportation so clients can accept employment at large employers such as Ingams, which aren’t accessible by public transport. Amantha and Jeremy to discuss further offline.
- Khaliah Tapu – is there an opportunity to expand public transport to these rural communities? Is this a public transport issue versus community transport?
  - WRC struggles to provide consistent and reliable transport to rural areas due to fluctuating NZTA funding and high costs. The current government priorities do not focus on public transport, making it difficult to expand services. Reviews of transport plans

occur every three years, with public feedback considered.

To address gaps, WRC funds Community Transport (CT) and Total Mobility, which are more affordable alternatives.

- Tony Marsters – can we get Total Mobility or the Accessibility Concession to cover ferries such as the Cooks Beach ferry? There is a precedent in Auckland with AT accepting Total Mobility cards on their ferries.
  - Amantha will discuss this with our Total Mobility coordinator Maurice Flynn, so that he can investigate the Auckland precedent and our position can be confirmed.

### 3. Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora update: Brent Gilbert De-Rios

- Remember to get your flu jab, particularly given the vulnerabilities of the patients we support!
- Impressive submission from the CT Forum to the RFI on non-acute patient transport.
  - No updates received yet but he will follow up with the national team for more information now that it has closed.

**Community Health Forums** are starting up again

- The content covered often relates to community transport needs, so it is valuable for us to be present whenever possible.
- These forums were previously organised and funded by Health NZ but moving forward they will be looking for community members to help with organising, promoting, sorting out a venue, and providing kai. Health NZ will likely still handle the mailing/distribution list but need support in facilitating these events.
- Please email Brent, [brent.gilbert-derios@bopdhb.govt.nz](mailto:brent.gilbert-derios@bopdhb.govt.nz) or Norma Taute, [norma.taute@tewhatauora.govt.nz](mailto:norma.taute@tewhatauora.govt.nz) for more information.
- Upcoming Health Forums are posted on the Waikato Community Transport [website calendar](#). We encourage you to check this calendar as we maintain it with relevant upcoming events.

### 4. Brokering Relationships and Creating Economies of Scale: Sarah Gibb

Following on from her workshop at the CT Symposium – what can success look like?

Think about:

- What are you doing now that works? How does that impact your community?
- What would you like to do and how would that impact on your community?

Funding: make the most of what you have and get creative

- One organisation, for example, has for-profit contracts that funds CT side
- What would that look like if we (the Forum) went through a dealership to purchase vans? If we bought 20, what would the price be? Would Council have buying power for bulk purchases?

Remember the **FREE** Goodman booking system available. Contact Amantha to find out more!

- Some users found it intimidating initially but those who are using it are liking it and finding it helps save them time.

Volunteers: groups need to think a bit more about how to reimburse drivers to attract people.

- Does it always need to be volunteers? Could it be part-time employment?

### Questions for Sarah

- Amantha – could we attract volunteers with honorariums?
  - Charities can offer honorariums as a thank you for significant voluntary work, such as roles like volunteer coordinator or board chairperson. These payments, which are taxed

as income, simplify the process compared to frequent

reimbursement forms. For example, it can be more efficient to pay a \$200/month Honorarium to save admin time on someone who submits many receipts, or to cover lunch and petrol for a regular volunteer driver.

- Jeremy Hall – if anyone is looking for volunteers, check out [Activity in the Community projects - Work and Income](#)
  - Work & Income encourages their clients to volunteer and get involved in community projects to increase people's confidence, build their CV, grow their networks, gain job skills and references, etc.
  - Contact your local Work & Income office for an application form.
- Brent Gilbert-De Rios: there has been discussion that ACC may not cover volunteers because it's not their paid employment. What could this mean for CT?
  - We are watching this space, and many submissions are being written and sent to the government. Firefighters are another example.

#### 5. Anything else? Open to the Forum.

- None

#### 6. Closing Karakia: Amantha Bowen

#### Actions:

Topic	Discussion	Action & time frame	Person(s) responsible
Health NZ RFI – Non-Acute Transport Solutions	Forum submitted feedback and would like to know what is happening.	Contact national office and find out the current status and any updates.  <u>April</u>	Brent Gilbert-De Rios
Community Transport and Climate Change	Due to space and time restraints, we removed this talk from the Symposium and Bridget offered to present the content as a webinar.	<u>Wed, 30 April, 1-2pm</u> on <a href="#">Microsoft Teams</a>  All are welcome! You don't need a Symposium ticket to attend.	All
Legal Review of CT	Defining what is and isn't possible under current legislation	Wrapping up - will report back in <u>June</u> .	Amantha Bowen
Using Total Mobility for ferries in Waikato	Tony Marsters asked why TM cards cannot be used on the Cooks Beach Ferry	Amantha to discuss this with our Total Mobility coordinator Maurice Flynn, so that he can investigate the Auckland precedent and our position can be confirmed.	Amantha Bowen
Employment Transport	Discuss the possibilities around developing employment transport options further.	Offline discussion to further this topic, between forums.	Amantha & Jeremy
Get your flu jab 🦠	Important given the work we do with vulnerable populations	<u>April and May</u>	All



Need Volunteers?	Work and Income may have people available looking for opportunities	Ongoing. See <a href="#">Activity in the Community projects</a> for more info.	All
Forum topics	Asking for suggestions on topics, issues, training, workshops, or any feedback for future forums.	Contact us at <a href="mailto:communitytransport@waikatoregion.govt.nz">communitytransport@waikatoregion.govt.nz</a> with any suggestions	All

**Upcoming 2025 forum dates:**

16 June

15 September

8 December

Any queries, or ideas for future forum topics, please contact Amantha Bowen or Kendra Corey at [communitytransport@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:communitytransport@waikatoregion.govt.nz)