

Total Mobility Update

Susi Marinkovich from the Regional Council Passenger Transport Operations team provided an update on Phase 2 of the Total Mobility Service.

- Total Mobility is door to door national transport scheme, funded by NZ Transport Agency (60%) and ratepayers (40%)
- Provides subsidised taxi travel for people with disabilities
- Waikato Regional Council administers the scheme, and assessments and voucher allocation is run by disability agencies such as CCS Disability Action
- In the Waikato, the scheme has:
 - Hamilton: 2348 members
 - Taupo: 264 members
 - Tokoroa: 329 members
- Applicants must have a physical, intellectual, psychological, sensory or neurological disability that prevents them from undertaking a journey unaccompanied on public transport. The disability can be permanent, temporary or fluctuating
- Phase 2 of the scheme commenced on 1 October, 2013
- Eligibility criteria widened to include children, rest home residents and people with temporary disabilities
- A maximum fare subsidy replaced previous town boundary restrictions. Each voucher entitles the user to a 50 per cent discount, up to a maximised fare amount.
- 147 new members have joined since 1 October. Out of these, 24 (16%) wouldn't have been eligible prior to the changes. Feedback from members and disability agencies has been positive

Wheels around Waikato (North Waikato)

Nobody was present to provide an update on North Waikato.

General Round Table Updates

- South Waikato are in the early stages of discussing their options for alternative modes of transport.
- 99.9% of the Waikato regional bus fleet are now fully accessible.
- CCS Waikato have been actively submitting on all Annual Plans and working closely with local authorities to encourage them to consider 'barriers to use' as part of their roading maintenance programmes. A working team has been set up to assist councils with accessibility audits and producing reports outlining prioritised recommendations for removing barriers to access. Councils may be able to tap into additional NZTA funding for this work. So far audits have occurred in Otorohanga District, Waipa and Thames with several more Councils showing interest.

Bill Cochrane 'The Changing Demographic profile of the Waikato and potential impacts on rural transport'

Bill provided the forum with a fascinating overview of demographic trends in the region and the resulting challenges facing the agencies responsible for social and economic policy development. In the face of an ageing and declining population some rural areas are already grappling with rapidly changing labour markets, stresses on public service provision and mounting debt, unsupported by clear national policy directives. Bill's presentation provided an overview of the complex linkages between population demographics, economic and social equity; and left the group with some thought provoking suggestions about 'what next' for rural NZ.

A full copy of Bill's presentation is attached.

Upcoming forums:

The group discussed whether there is an interest in regular passenger transport (operations) updates from the Regional Council team. It was agreed that two updates per year would be useful and these will be scheduled into the future programme.

A suggested meeting programme for the year will be drafted and circulated for discussion at the next meeting. If any forum members have particular suggestions or requests about discussion topics/speakers for the year please let Greg, Paul, Jo or Sarah know.

Forum dates for the remainder of the year are:

- 12 May
- 11 August
- 10 November

The Chair closed the meeting at 3 pm.