

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP

Minutes

Thursday 8 March 2011

VCOSS Boardroom

Level 8, 128 Exhibition Street Melbourne

Present:

Andrew Langley – SCOPE
Bec Feldman – Youth Disability Advocacy Service
Bob Claffey – Blind Citizens Australia
Brandon Ah Tong-Pereira – Vision Australia
Brenda Gabe – Victorian Disability Advocacy Network
Carmel Boyle – Carmel Boyle Associates
Dan Davidson – Individual advocate
David Brant – VCOSS Board Member
Debra Dean – Moreland Disability Advisory Committee, Housing Resource and Support Service
Elaine Burke – Yooralla
Gavin Balharrie – Vicdeaf
Gordon Trott – Disability Access and Inclusion Committee, Frankston City Council
Gordon Young – Victorian Local Governance Association
Llewellyn Reynders, VCOSS Transport Policy Analyst
Marg Stevens – Individual advocate
Michael Merrett – Community representative
Michelle Lane, VCOSS Policy Support Officer (minutes)
Pauline Thorson – Southern Mallee Transport Connections
Peter Fletcher – Blind Citizens Australia, Disability Resources Centre, DAS
Peter Thompson – Disability Connections Victoria, Brimbank Disability Advisory Network
Ray Jordan – Individual advocate
Sheryl McHugh – Wellington Shire Council Transport Connections
Sven Eriksson – Disabled Winter Sport Australia
Tyrell Heathcote – MS Advocacy

Apologies:

Christine Harding, Karingal Community Living
Christopher Daley, Individual Advocate
Diavdi Williams, Metro Access Officer, Booroondara City Council
John Huta, Wyndam City Council
Lisa Frost, Metro Access Officer, Brimbank City Council
Liz Ellis
Mark Feigan, Office of the Public Advocate
Ping Fang, Individual advocate
Richard Armstrong, Peninsular Advisory Committee for Elders (PACE)
Robyn Hemley, Ararat Council
Sarah Fordyce, National Disability Services, Victoria
Shawn Stevenson, Autism Victoria

1. Welcome and introductions

Llewellyn Reynders welcomed participants to the first meeting of the working group. Participants introduced themselves and their background in accessibility issues.

2. Confirmation of agenda

Members confirmed the agenda proposed without additional items.

3. Accessible transport overview

Llewellyn provided an overview on the background and developments of transport accessibility, and the working group.

- VCOSS recognised the need to establish a transport accessibility working group to improve communication between different groups working on this issue.
- VCOSS auspiced the Access Watch project in 2008. This project attempted to critically examine whether the implementation of the Disability Standards for Accessible Transport (DSAPT) in Victoria are meeting the varied needs of people with a range of disabilities.
- The Victorian Auditor General's Office released a report in 2009, [*Making Public Transport More Accessible for People Who Face Mobility Challenges*](#), documented State Government failures in upgrading transport accessibility.
- There are new opportunities for change in transport accessibility now that a new government has been elected in Victoria. This is a chance for a renewed campaign.
- The State Government has promised the delivery of 50 new trams by 2017 and a there is a commitment for 40 new metropolitan trains, as well as a number of new train stations and station upgrades.
- The introduction of myki is currently under review.
- 84 new platform tram stops have been constructed in the last 3 years.
- Michael Merrett noted that there is now a scooter and wheelchair access pass for free transport travel if arranged with the Department of Transport (DOT), noting that having this pass is still indicative of transport inaccessibility and that there is a need to run a campaign around independently accessible transport.
- There is a new operational model for the Public Transport Access Committee (PTAC). Llewellyn circulated a notice of nominations to transport contacts regarding 7 new places on PTAC. Nominations are due this Friday.
- The previous ALP government allocated an accessible transport fund to improve accessibility in the transport system over 4 years, but all this funding has now been allocated. For example, money is allocated for bridging plates on Centralis Trams but no further commitments have being announced unless future funding is allocated.
- In addition, the \$150 million promise of investment by the previous government in its Victorian Transport Plan over 10 years was had not yet allocated this funding in the forward estimates of the State Budget.
- The new Coalition government has not yet committee to providing funding for accessibility upgrades, other than those improvements mentioned above.
- VCOSS' top priority in discussions with the new government about transport accessibility is that there is a fund for future accessibility improvements.

- The Report of the Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Disability has been due to be released for the last 3 years but has not yet arrived.

4. Towards an Accessible Transport Working Group

- The scope of the work undertaken by the group is to be determined collectively by members.
- VCOSS recorded 3 broad purposes that emerged from the *Free To Move* accessible transport forum in December 2010:
 - information sharing between advocates and representatives
 - discussing emerging issues and prioritising issues of most concern
 - campaign: actually formulating and conducting campaigns
- Members generally understood all three elements were necessary mechanisms that could be facilitated by the group. More strongly, however, the group emphasised that it needed to behave in a strategic way, utilising a range of mechanisms to drive change in the accessibility and inclusion policies, spending and outcomes produced by government
- Key themes emerged from discussion:
 - That transport systems should be independently and universally accessible
 - That the group needed to incorporate the diversity of access needs, including those of people with mobility and sensory impairments, parents with small children, and locational inequities including for rural and regional Victoria
 - That the group needed to facilitate a flow of information (including from other groups such as PTAC) so that it could determine strategic priorities on which to make an impact through campaigning activities
 - Ideas included facebook campaigns, a web presence, public awareness campaigns, noting the success of the pt4me2 campaign run by the metropolitan transport forum

5. The form of a group

- It was noted that this group should not duplicate the work of PTAC and that having networks operating outside of government can be a useful mechanism to supplement the work being done by PTAC. It was noted that the chair of PTAC has resigned for personal reasons. Group members noted the need for an independent chair of PTAC.
- The group discussed development of a vision and aims for the working group. Llewellyn confirmed that these could be drafted from the notes of this meeting.
- In response to the idea that video-conferencing as a means of including rural and regional members in meetings of the working group, it was confirmed that the internet facilities at VCOSS are not yet fast enough use Skype.
- It was noted that the transport accessibility issues raised at VCOSS *Free to Move* forum in December provide a starting point for informing the group of key issues, although it was also raised that there may be emerging issues that also require attention

- It was noted that government funding for transport accessibility is a primary concern, although others also noted that the work of this group is likely to result in incremental wins in the long term. Some positive changes can be achieved without financial investment.
- Appreciation was noted for the *Free to Move* forum and its opportunity for engagement with the Transport Minister, as well as usefulness of the videos of the forum on the VCOSS website.
- Members discussed the possibility of what will be raised at the government transport accessibility forum to be held in a few weeks.
- Members agreed that VCOSS boardroom would be suitable for the working group in terms of accessibility but noted that there are lots of apologies today.
- It was suggested that the group consider earlier start and finish times to make it easier for members to travel during off-peak travel times.
- It was noted that consultation on meeting times for the group was a good process.
- Members agreed on the frequency of meetings to be monthly meetings initially, with future discussion of the composition required in the future, such as specific sub-groups tasked with particular areas or issues.
- It was agreed that Llewellyn will continue to facilitate the group through its initial meetings
- It was suggested that information papers prepared by Llewellyn to be circulated in advance as a starting point for discussion at meetings, such as a brief on existing funding initiatives.
- Members agreed that membership would constitute the list of people who have expressed interest in the work of the group collated by VCOSS
- the Medical Companion pilot project launched by Travellers Aid was noted by the group. The organisation's volunteers are now trained to meet and greet people at transport portals and accompany them to medical appointments, including the frail and aged as well as people with disabilities. A free service is being trialled until the end of December 2011. More information can be viewed on the [Travellers Aid website](#).

In summary, the functions of the group were agreed to be:

Structure – VCOSS to facilitate the group's activities.

Vision and Aims – To be confirmed, draft to be developed from these meeting minutes.

Meeting venue – VCOSS boardroom. Larger meetings can be taken off site.

Meeting frequency – A few monthly meetings to be scheduled, followed by a review of future structure, such as sub-groups on particular issues

Membership – Includes the list of interested people collected by VCOSS

6. Agenda items

Items proposed for next meeting:

- Terms of Reference
- Methods of campaigning

Action – Members to bring ideas for methods of campaigning the next meeting.

7. Date of potential future meeting and close

Action – Llewellyn to discuss next meeting date with members.
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