

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan

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Michael Nolan

Transport needs for disabled and impaired on the West Coast are not being met and taking onboard the 820 west coast members signed to the Total Mobility Scheme should not be considered an accurate gauge on the number of disabilities or impairments that could potentially utilise public and mobility services transport should adequate services be available.

Consideration should be given to the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with a disability). The New Zealand government has signed to the UNCRPD and ratified the UNCRPD in 2008, taking a leading role in the development of the convention. The (UNCRPD) is a commitment to disabled people enjoying the same human rights and opportunities as all other citizens

Access to public transport - the absence of public transport means the disabled on the West Coast have to rely on other transportation means. This includes access to appointments, to shop at their local supermarket/s, attend church services and public meetings. Enjoying the outdoors and local parks, recreation areas.

Today, society's understanding of disability is improving as we recognize "disability" as what occurs when a person's functional needs are not addressed in his or her physical and social environment. By not considering disability a personal deficit or shortcoming, and instead thinking of it as a social responsibility in which all people can be supported to live independent and full lives, it becomes easier to recognize and address challenges that all people-including those with disabilities-experience.

More needs to be done about the availability of public transport for the disabled - there are 3 main centres on the West Coast being Hokitika, Greymouth and Westport. Only two of these localities have a local mobility taxi service, the third having lost its ability to provide due to compliance costs and lack of use. This can hardly be improved if the initial service is not provided for and what can be quantified as "lack of use"

In addition, business transport providers have not done enough to cater for the disabled. Services such as Intercity, Atomic Shuttle, Coast to Coast Shuttle do not provide disabled access and transport on any coaches travelling up and down, to and from the West Coast.

A consolidated effort must be made to ensure the availability of public transport that is accessible including subsidies for private operators to adequately offer mobility transport options for our disabled community members. The Total mobility Scheme should be more than a financial assistant and extend into the tools and vehicles required to fully support all inclusive transport options.

The total mobility scheme is New Zealand wide, but it does not cater for New Zealand wide. Recent experience in Auckland provides staggering statistics for mobility transport - a ticket with Re-Li-On-Us mobility taxi service from Auckland Airport to the CBD comes at a cost of \$200 for a one way trip, with the Total Mobility Scheme system (of course that is more than double that of a non-disabled taxi fare??). If this is a Nationwide system why the

tiered level of subsidy? Is the NZTA subsidy for Aucklanders \$11? I think not, so why should it matter where you are travelling - the allowance should apply to the region you are travelling in and not the region where you reside.

The majority of regions in New Zealand issue a magnetic type swipe card (the West Coast Regional Council still provide a paper voucher system - one of only two regions in New Zealand still doing this). The paper voucher system requires a large amount of explaining - firstly you must inform the taxi company when making your booking that you have the "paper" voucher and when you meet your driver you have to explain all over again why you have a paper voucher and not a "swipe card" in order for the driver to accept the details and process the transaction.

My submission is for the decision makers to come to the table, to invite disability advocates and those with the lived experience of disabilities into the discussion to support the provision of suitable, fit for purpose transport solutions. The greatest knowledge and input can only come from those with the lived experience, in order for those decision makers to fully appreciate what it takes to provide a disabled person the same opportunities as any other member of the public.

I wish to speak on behalf of my submission.

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