

ADOPTED	
COUNCIL MEETING MIN	81/23
DATE:	19 APRIL 2023

VERSION NO	2.0
REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2027
FILE NUMBER	COS300013

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Objective

To provide transport to meet the specialised needs of disadvantaged groups in the community, including isolated families, the frail aged, younger people with disabilities, and their carers.

Legislative requirements

- *Disability Services Act 1986* (Cth)
- *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
- *Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993* (NSW)
- Disability Service Standards (NSW) and National Standards for Disability Services 2013
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Code of Conduct
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards
- *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth)
- Australian Government Aged Care Quality Standards (applicable from 1 July 2019) and Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Rules
- Australian Government Department of Health Charter of Rights and Responsibilities - Home Care (2017)
- Commonwealth Home Support Programme Guidelines and Manual
- *Work Health and Safety Act and Regulation 2011* (NSW)
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW)
- *State Records Act 1998* (NSW)
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW)
- National Privacy Principles
- *Passenger Transport Act 1990* (NSW)
- *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* (NSW)
- *Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2017* (NSW)
- Transport Roads & Maritime Services Rules and Regulations
- Road Rules (NSW)

Related policies and plans

- Transport for NSW Annual Funding Agreement with Mid-Western Regional Council as executed from time to time
- Australian Government Department of Health Charter of Aged Care Rights
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Work Health & Safety Policy
- Light Fleet Procedure
- Purchase of Goods and Service Procedure
- Gifts and Benefits Policy
- Financial Reserves Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Smoke Free Outdoor Areas Policy
- Records Management Policy

- Access to Information Policy
- Children & Vulnerable People Policy and Procedure
- Australian Government's Serious Incident Response Scheme

Policy

The purpose of Mudgee Community Transport is to provide services and undertake activities which alleviate transport disadvantage within its operating area.

Service Purpose, Philosophy and Outcome

PHILOSOPHY

Mudgee Community Transport believes in:

- The right of people to make supported and independent choices in their own lives through, amongst other methods, access to information (initially and on an ongoing basis) in a format appropriate to their needs.
- The right of people to dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality.
- The right of people to be valued as individuals.
- The right of people to have mobility and to have health and wellbeing.
- The right of people to access services on a non-discriminatory basis without prejudice because of racial, sexual and other types of discrimination.
- The right of the community to safe, comfortable and reliable services.
- The right of the community to answerable, accountable and responsive services.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes pursued by Mudgee Community Transport shall be:

- That people who are frail aged and elderly, those living with disability, and their carers are appropriately supported where they choose to live in their own homes. That people who are transport disadvantaged can live independently and with dignity within their community.
- That the Service operates in an effective, efficient and accountable manner.

TARGET GROUPS

The target groups for specific Mudgee Community Transport services are defined by funding and regulatory guidelines. Mudgee Community Transport clients include:

- Frail aged people and their carers.
- People with living with disability and their carers.
- People who are at risk of premature or inappropriate institutionalisation.
- People who are transport disadvantaged due to physical, socioeconomic or geographical factors.
- People who are financially disadvantaged
- People who require access to non-emergency health-related transport and are transport disadvantaged.

Service Promotion and Availability

OBJECTIVE

To promote Mudgee Community Transport to the community and individuals by means which are cost effective and culturally appropriate.

POLICY

- The Commonwealth Home Support Program Coordinator ('the Coordinator') will ensure that the service is promoted appropriately through:
 - Responding to telephone inquiries.
 - Distribution of brochures/newsletters to community health centres, doctors' waiting rooms, other service agencies within the community as well as to clients of the service.
 - Ensuring information provided is current, accurate and timely, and in a way that is clear and easy to understand.
 - Targeting special needs groups.
 - Meetings including interagency, disability services network, aged support groups.
 - Local media.
 - Community services/organisations such as Housing Plus, Barnardos, Lifeskills Inc, Mudgee Community Health and Mudgee Wellness Centre.
- The Coordinator will provide information about other local services and how to access them on enquiry.
- The Coordinator will clearly explain or provide information as to why transport services may be unavailable.
- The Coordinator will at least annually review service availability in accordance with changes to funding, availability of resources, demand and specific need.

OBJECTIVE

- To ensure that the service will be managed in an efficient and effective way in accordance with relevant aged care and disability standards (as amended from time to time) and the requirements of the funding agreements between the Mid-Western Regional Council and Transport for New South Wales and any other funding body.
- To manage the Service in accordance with Mid-Western Regional Council policies.
- To ensure that clients receive service that reflects well-planned, efficient and effective management.
- A commitment to ongoing planning and evaluation to make sure that the needs of the target groups are understood and every effort is being made to address those needs.
- A commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery and management through activities such as annual audits, training and planning days, client surveys and prompt and thorough complaint management.

POLICY

The planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the service are the responsibility of Mid-Western Regional Council through the Manager Community and Cultural Services and the Coordinator. The process includes:

- Mid-Western Regional Council will appoint a Coordinator and Community Services Officers.
- Mid-Western Regional Council will provide financial management and accountability.
- Mid-Western Regional Council will ensure that relevant insurance is maintained covering Workers Compensation, Public Liability, Professional Indemnity as well as Building and

Contents cover.

- Day to day management of the service will be the responsibility of the Coordinator in accordance with the signed Position Description.
- The Coordinator will ensure appropriate and accurate records for all major aspects of efficient operation of the service are kept in accordance with the requirements of funding bodies and Mid-Western Regional Council's Records Management Policy.

Service Management

- The Coordinator will ensure the service budget is regularly monitored and adhered to.
- The Coordinator will ensure that the service adheres to all necessary legislation at Federal and State level.
- Stakeholders of the service will be consulted by the Coordinator on a regular basis.
- Client input will be encouraged in the outcome of planning and evaluation activities.
- Reports will be presented to Council on a regular basis or as requested.
- The Coordinator will ensure that the funding agreements and audit reports are submitted within funding bodies' timeframes. Also reports and statistical data are submitted in a timely manner.

Clients' Rights and Responsibilities

OBJECTIVE

- Clients of the service and their carers have the same rights as all members of the community. These rights are to be acknowledged and promoted at every opportunity.
- To assist clients to be confident in exercising their rights.
- To make sure clients and their carers understand their responsibilities to the service and the volunteers providing the service.

POLICY

Clients' Rights

- Clients should be made aware of the standard of service which they can expect. Services should be provided in a safe manner which respects the dignity and independence of the client, is responsive to the social, cultural and physical needs of the client and the needs of the carer.
- Clients' access to services should be decided only on the basis of need and capacity of the service to meet that need. Clients have the right to refuse a service and refusal should not prejudice their future access to services.
- The client, or with their permission their carer or advocate, has access to all information about themselves held by Mudgee Community Transport in accordance with the provisions of Council's Access to Information Policy.
- In cases where a client has a legal guardian or advocate appointed to act on their behalf, the rights of the guardian or advocate are to be acknowledged and respected to the extent stipulated in the guardianship or advocacy arrangements.
- The client, and with their permission, their carer should be made aware of all the transport options available, and any associated charges.
- Mudgee Community Transport will conduct an annual survey and open and honest input is requested from its clients.
- Clients have the right to complain about the service they are receiving without fear of retribution.
- Complaints by clients will be dealt with fairly and promptly. The client may involve an

advocate of their choice to represent his/her interests.

- Clients' views will be taken into account in the planning and evaluation of the service.
- Clients' right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

CLIENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Clients, or if appropriate, carers, should provide reasonable notice if the Service is not required. Where possible a minimum of 2 working days' notice is required for cancellations thus allowing reassignment of volunteers and vehicles to clients awaiting transport.
- Clients should recognise the potential demand on Mudgee Community Transport when making bookings and recognise that its resources (vehicles and volunteer drivers) are limited.
- Clients must utilise seatbelts and other vehicle safety devices as directed by the volunteer driver and in accordance with Roads and Maritime Services Road Rules.
- Clients are not to act in a way that affects the health and safety of drivers and other clients.
- Clients must adhere to all reasonable instruction given to them by the driver.
- Clients should act in a way which respects the right of other clients and the volunteer driver.
- Clients should respect the confidentiality of information about other clients or the volunteer driver which they may obtain whilst using the service.
- Clients need to take responsibility for the results of any decision they make.
- Clients are at all times to treat Mudgee Community Transport property in an appropriate respectful manner.
- Clients should advise of any additional cargo, such as assistive living aids, to be transported prior to undertaking a trip.
- Food and drink (with the exception of bottled water) are not to be consumed in the service vehicles.
- Clients must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs when utilising the service.

Client Advocates

OBJECTIVE

To maintain the client's right to use an advocate of their own choice to negotiate on their behalf.

POLICY

- Clients wishing to use an advocate should inform the Coordinator of the name of the person they wish to negotiate on their behalf.
- Clients may request the Coordinator assist in identifying an appropriate person to act as an advocate. Advocacy must be in the best interest of the client and not an extension of the service.
- The client has the right to change their advocate at any time and should inform the Coordinator of any change.
- The Coordinator is to ensure that clients are aware of their right to use an advocate at the time of initial contact.
- Information regarding the right to advocacy should be included in the Service brochure which is given to all clients at time of entry into the service.

Client Entry to Service

OBJECTIVE

- Mudgee Community Transport will endeavour to ensure that transport is available to the frail-aged, people living with disability and their carers and those who do not have access to public transport, as per the guidelines set down by the funding bodies associated with provision of funds for the operation of the service. The service will be provided without discrimination in line with the guidelines, as provided by the relevant funding bodies.

POLICY

Mudgee Community Transport Service will provide transport needs to the target groups through referrals from:

- Medical practitioner.
- Hospital or any health or welfare service.
- A relative, friend, carer or neighbour.
- My Aged Care
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- The person requiring the service.

The referral pathway is dependent upon the funding program funds ultimately applied to the individual client's service use.

TARGET GROUPS

- Within the targeted population there are a number of special needs groups:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 50 years and over and still residing in their own homes
 - Frail aged people aged 65 years and over and still residing in their own homes.
 - People living in rural and remote areas.
- Clients must comply with regulations set down within Transport for NSW and Service NSW guidelines or any other regulatory body when travelling in a Mudgee Community Transport vehicle.
- Following initial contact with Mudgee Community Transport, the Coordinator or Community Services Officer will provide the person requesting the service with a Client Information and Referral Record, Pricing and Guidelines Brochure, Travelling in Daylight Hours brochure and Clients Rights and Responsibilities and Charter of Care Recipients' Rights and Responsibilities – Home Care (where applicable).
- On receipt of the completed Client Information and Referral Record, the Service will assess the client's eligibility to become a client of the service. The client will be informed as soon as this decision has been made.
- Regular assessments of clients need to be conducted to ensure effectiveness of service provided, particularly when clients' circumstances change.

Client Exit from the Service

OBJECTIVE

To provide an amicable exit strategy for a client who wishes to withdraw from Mudgee Community Transport or a clear set of guidelines for the termination of service to a client who

fails to comply with the policies and procedures of the service.

POLICY

- A client has the right to withdraw from Mudgee Community Transport at any time. This withdrawal does not hinder the client from receiving the Service at a later date.
- The Coordinator has the right to withdraw service if the client does not follow the responsibilities set out in the service brochure and behaves in a manner which does not respect the rights and safety of other clients and staff and volunteers.
- A client may be withdrawn from the service if the client fails/refuses to comply with regulations set down within Service NSW guidelines or any other regulatory body.
- Before service is withdrawn (either temporarily or permanently), a letter will be provided to the client outlining reasons for any possible withdrawal of service and giving information on how the client can take further action if they desire.

These items should be read in conjunction with Mid-Western Regional Council's policies, with particular reference to its Complaints Policy.

Privacy and Confidentiality

OBJECTIVE

Protecting the privacy of clients is very important to the service and the following policy and procedure is designed to ensure that details about clients are kept confidential.

POLICY

- The privacy and confidentiality of clients will be maintained at all times and disposed of in accordance with the National Privacy Principles and any other relevant legislation that comes into effect from time to time.
- The only information recorded and stored by the service will be information relevant to providing the service and what is agreed to and willingly given by the client on the Client Information and Referral Record.
- Information about the client's records held by the service will not be passed on to another service without the consent of the client. Consent can be in the form of a signature on the Client Information and Referral Record or verbally, in person or over the telephone.
- Where clients have given permission to be referred to other agencies, their records will be passed on to the referral agency in person, via mail or email. Only those records relevant to the referral recipient's services shall be passed on.
- Access to client files will be only by Council staff who are directly involved in the work of Mudgee Community Transport. Information regarding clients will be stored appropriately within the office and the office will be locked when unattended.

Physical Contact

OBJECTIVE

- Mudgee Community Transport acknowledges that in the day to day provision of its services, some physical contact between passengers and team members may be both appropriate and necessary.
- To avoid misunderstanding and distress arising from physical contact in the course of

service delivery, team members (including volunteers) shall comply with the following policy.

POLICY

- No Mudgee Community Transport team member shall have physical contact with a passenger except to assist or ensure their safe and comfortable use of Service, or in the case of first aid being required (by a current first aid certificate holder).
- Wherever practicable, no team member shall provide a service to a vulnerable or “at risk” client (e.g. children, people with intellectual disabilities) without the assistance of an advocate or of another person nominated by the referring service or family member of the client.
- Wherever practicable, team members will clearly explain the reason for and nature of any intended physical contact between themselves and clients and obtain their consent.
- Mudgee Community Transport will endeavour to identify any cultural considerations relevant to physical contact between clients and team members and positively address them in the delivery of services.

Suspected Client Trauma

OBJECTIVE

- Mudgee Community Transport is a provider of passenger transport services. The team members are trained to provide transport services which cater to a variety of special needs experienced by people within our local community, but are not trained as welfare, health or legal specialists.
- Mudgee Community Transport does however acknowledge that, having a high degree of personal contact with many people who are otherwise isolated from the wider community, its team members are often in a position where they are the first and sometimes the only people to become aware of hardship, misfortune, distress or trauma which passengers may be experiencing.
- Whilst Mudgee Community Transport and its team members are not qualified to deal with a range of situations, the following policy shall be observed in order to safeguard the wellbeing of clients and bring suspected hardship or trauma to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

POLICY

- Cases of suspected trauma will be treated as confidential.
- No team member shall attempt to interfere, mediate or become in anyway personally involved where they suspect a client of experiencing trauma resulting from any form of abuse (e.g. sexual, child or elder abuse) unless required to comply with procedures associated with Council’s Children and Vulnerable People Policy, including the Serious Incident Response Scheme.
- Team members, upon becoming aware of a trauma possibly being experienced by a client, shall follow instructions in accordance with Council’s Children and Vulnerable People Policy and Procedure and instructions from any relevant authority or emergency service.
- Any team members suspected of abusing a client will be immediately removed from the involvement of that client while allegations are investigated.
- The Coordinator will ensure the interests of the client take precedence over those of the client’s family or of other members of the community and will:
 - o Assess the client’s need for immediate medical attention and if required, ensure that it is provided;

- o Seek to arrange emergency respite care, admission to hospital or referral to the police if the alleged abuser needs to be separated to ensure the client's safety while respecting the rights of the abuser;
- o Where necessary contact family members, the client's general practitioner and other community services involved;
- o Report all suspected or confirmed cases of abuse to the Mid-Western Regional Council's Work Health & Safety & Risk Coordinator; and
- o Once investigated, the Manager and Coordinator will determine if there is a legal or contractual requirement to report the incident and will ensure the matter is notified to the appropriate authority/s.
- Mudgee Community Transport acknowledges that each case of abuse is unique and that the determined interventions should take into account the nature and context of the abusive relationship and whether consent for intervention is given, other than in a situation where the law requires the matter to be reported.
- Mudgee Community Transport will maintain confidentiality of information and management of communication and documentation related to the incident of abuse in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy and National Privacy Principles.
- Team members who have been involved in an incident of abuse related to one of their clients will be referred to counselling and support if deemed necessary and appropriate.

Clients at Risk at Home

OBJECTIVE

- Mudgee Community Transport acknowledges its duty of care to provide safe and comfortable transport services to its clients.
- As many of its clients require constant care or supervision, Mudgee Community Transport further acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that vulnerable or at risk clients are delivered into safe and appropriate environments upon service completion.

POLICY

- In situations where normal or intended arrangements fail to provide clients with an appropriate environment to be delivered into upon service completion (eg. a child is delivered to an empty home or an adult passenger is delivered into a home without power, heating or food) the following arrangements shall apply:
 - o No client shall be left unattended in an unsafe or inappropriate environment.
 - o Where a carer or guardian fails to meet a client as planned, and where operational considerations prevent a team member remaining with the client concerned, the service shall continue with the concerned client and return to that client's home upon service completion.
 - o Where a client is returned to a home which does not provide a safe or habitable environment, and where operational considerations allow, team members shall render what assistance is safe and practicable in order to resolve the situation.
 - o Wherever practicable, the Coordinator or nominated team member shall be immediately notified of the situation.
 - o Immediate communication will be made with "emergency contacts" (identified during client assessment) in order to resolve the situation.
 - o Where reasonable action by Mudgee Community Transport cannot ensure a safe and appropriate environment for a client, the client shall be delivered to an appropriate agency.
- The Coordinator shall be responsible for keeping an up to date list of such agencies and ensuring adequate distribution of the information to team members.

Client Emergencies

OBJECTIVE

Mudgee Community Transport acknowledges its duty of care to provide safe and comfortable transport. Many clients of Mudgee Community Transport both live alone and are frail. It is an unfortunate reality that such people occasionally meet with accidents or illness and, isolated and immobile within their homes, are unable to summon help. It is also unfortunately not unheard of for a Mudgee Community Transport team member to be the first person to become aware of, or suspect such circumstances, which may require prompt action to ensure the wellbeing of the client concerned.

In consideration of these facts the following procedure shall apply when doubt exists regarding the wellbeing of a client upon calling at their home and receiving no answer.

AT THE CLIENT'S HOME

- After receiving no answer from the client upon calling at the door, and when there is good reason to suspect that the client is within the home, a "walk around" of the premises, including discreetly looking in windows, whilst calling the client, will be undertaken (the client may be in the backyard, for example).
- Wherever practicable, the Coordinator or nominated team member shall be immediately notified of the situation and then kept informed of any further developments.
- If necessary, neighbours should be discreetly questioned to establish the possible whereabouts of the client (e.g. perhaps the intended client was seen leaving). Enquiries may also be made with the local hospital or medical centres.
- Unless there is clear evidence that the client is within the house and in need of immediate first aid (in which case contact the police and ambulance, then wait for the police to be present before forced entry to the client's home is attempted), no further action is usually required to be taken.
- Records including bookings/run sheets will be checked to ensure no information error has been made.
- Immediate communication will be made with "emergency contacts" (identified during client assessment) and other appropriate sources (e.g. destination venue) in order to establish the whereabouts of the client.
- A welfare check by local police may then be deemed appropriate in some instances.

LOST CLIENTS ON RETURN JOURNEY

All passenger transport operators must deal with situations where clients do not present themselves or are late for scheduled return services. Such situations are however of particular concern for Mudgee Community Transport because many of its clients have special care needs and/or are vulnerable. In view of this fact, the following procedures shall apply where clients do not present themselves as arranged for return services.

- Wherever practicable, the Coordinator or nominated team member shall be notified immediately of the lost client situation and then kept informed of any further developments.
- Team members shall make all reasonable attempts to locate the client.
- All actions taken to locate a lost client, including postponing scheduled service departure, will be taken in consideration of the comfort and safety of other clients (e.g. clients shall not be left for extended periods in vehicles where they are subject to extremes of heat/cold etc., vulnerable clients shall not be left unattended).
- If out of Mudgee and all reasonable attempts have been made to locate the client,

police are to be contacted (as appropriate).

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT OFFICE PROCEDURE

- By contacting appropriate persons, including “emergency contacts”, the Coordinator or nominated team member shall endeavour to establish whether the client has made alternate arrangements for their return.
- Where a client cannot be located before operational or client safety/comfort considerations require the departure of the service, appropriate persons including “emergency contacts” and agencies, including health and police departments will be informed.
- Destination/venue, next of kin, family, carers and/or “emergency contacts” of other clients will be contacted where significant delays of service will affect their expected time of arrival plans or arrangements.

PASSENGER ILLNESS OR INJURY

- Many Mudgee Community Transport clients are frail or of fragile health, and may unfortunately succumb to illness or injury whilst using a service.
- In view of this fact, the following procedures shall be applied:
 - Team members shall monitor the health and wellbeing of clients at all times during the delivery of services.
 - Illness or injury during a service will be responded to immediately using appropriate personal protection equipment (e.g. disposable gloves).
 - Priorities for team members responding to client illness or injury shall be:
 - minimising risk to any other client or team member.
 - obtaining emergency assistance as required (e.g. ambulance).
 - delivering first-aid to their best ability (if first aid trained).
 - minimising distress to other clients.
 - conveying the client to an appropriate source of assistance (e.g. hospital).
 - notifying the Coordinator or nominated team member, including Council’s WHS team, of the situation.
 - keeping them informed of any further developments.
- Any blood or body fluid spill shall be dealt with using Universal Precautions procedures.

MUDGEE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT OFFICE PROCEDURE

- The next of kin or nominated “emergency contact” of the affected client will be contacted and advised of developments.
- Destination/venue, next of kin, family, carers and/or “emergency contacts” will be contacted where significant delays of service will affect expected arrival plans or arrangements.

All instructions within this policy are to be read in conjunction with instructions issued by Transport for NSW from time to time in respect of serious incidents.

INFECTION CONTROL

OBJECTIVE

To ensure the dangers of transmissible illness to both team members and clients are kept to a minimum.

PROCEDURE

MINOR INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES

- Where practicable, team members when effected by a minor illness such as a cold, will avoid close contact with clients, and in particular those who are frail or in poor health.
- Volunteers shall inform staff, as soon as possible, if they suspect that they may be affected by a minor infectious illness and the roster will be adjusted accordingly.

SPILL AND FLUID PROTECTION

- All blood and human body fluids (including urine, faeces and vomit) shall be treated as potential carriers of serious infectious disease.
- Prior to the delivery of Mudgee Community Transport services which involve contact with clients, team members shall wash hands and cover any cuts, abrasions, broken or damaged skin with a waterproof dressing.
- All Mudgee Community Transport vehicles shall be equipped with first aid kits and spill protection and cleaning supplies which shall be replenished regularly.
- Team members shall at all times, use personal protection equipment when isolating, removing, cleansing and disinfecting any spill of blood or human body fluids.
- Where a team member has had an exposure to blood (contact through unprotected cuts, broken skin or damaged skin), this shall be reported immediately to the Coordinator. The Coordinator shall immediately contact an appropriate local medical adviser or:

The Albion Centre

(Sydney Metropolitan)

Fax

02 9332 9600

02 9331 3490

- Spillage of blood or body fluids in Mudgee Community Transport vehicles shall be reported to the Coordinator and documented on the Vehicle Checklist Form attached to all drivers' daily paperwork or on the vehicle tablet, as appropriate.

Lost Property

OBJECTIVE

Mudgee Community Transport team members are required to assist clients ensure that personal property is not left on vehicles. Items of property that do become lost shall be returned to their owners wherever possible. Additionally, Mudgee Community Transport is committed to maintaining privacy and confidentiality in the administration of lost property procedures.

PROCEDURE

Lost Property

- Volunteers shall ensure that when assisting clients to disembark from a service all reasonable effort is taken to ensure that clients have not left any personal property on the vehicle. Any items found in the vehicle are to be either returned to the client on the day or returned to the Mudgee Community Transport office.

Found Property

- At the completion of each Mudgee Community Transport service, vehicles shall be inspected to ensure that no items of lost property remain on board. All items lost property identified shall be removed from the vehicle and returned to the Mudgee Community Transport Office.
- Items of lost property shall be inspected only for the purposes of:
 - establishing the identity of the owner.
 - establishing that no perishable or dangerous goods are contained.
- Perishable items shall be disposed of prior to collection as soon as they begin to deteriorate.
- Dangerous goods shall be secured or disposed of according to the health and safety interests of team members.
- If ownership of items of lost property is established, all reasonable steps will be taken to contact the owner to inform them where the property is held and how they can arrange for its return.
- If ownership of lost property cannot be established:
 - The item shall be retained for a minimum of period of three months.
 - After this time lost property shall be disposed of.
- Claims of ownership of unidentified lost property shall be verified through the claimants' description of items prior to their viewing or inspection.

Grievance Procedures

A grievance is defined as a wrong, real or imagined, considered as grounds for complaints, which can potentially be resolved. Clients, carers, volunteers or any other person has the right to complain about the service without fear of retribution.

Complaints are a valid form of feedback and may provide the opportunity to improve the quality or management of the service.

OBJECTIVE

- To provide a mechanism within the service structure to deal with complaints in a just, appropriate and effective manner.
- To ensure that clients and client advocates wishing to make complaint are aware of procedures and steps in the complaint handling process.
- To ensure that all complaints are dealt with sensitively, objectively and confidentially.

POLICY

- Clients are invited and encouraged to use an advocate of their choice or have an advocate appointed to assist in making the complaint and to ensure the complaints procedure is followed.
- Clients making a complaint, either informally or formally, will not be excluded from receiving service in the future.
- The client will, in the first instance, make the complaint to the Coordinator. This may be verbal or in writing.
- The Coordinator will confirm with the complainant the accuracy of what has been recorded and explain what will happen next.

The Coordinator is to deal with the complaint as expeditiously as possible in accordance with the detail outlined in Council's Complaints Policy.

- If after the Complaints Policy procedure, the issue is still not resolved, the

client can complain to the

The Ombudsman's Office
(NSW) Community
Services Division
Level 24, 580 George
Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Phone: 1800 451 524 (Freecall)
Email: nswombo.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Aged Care Quality and Safety
Commission GPO Box 9819
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Phone: 1800 951 822
Email: audit.feedback@agedcarequality.gov.au
Web: www.agedcarequality.gov.au

NDIS Quality and Safeguards
Commission PO Box 210
PENRITH NSW 2750
Phone: 1800 035 544
Web: www.ndiscommission.gov.au

- The Coordinator is to ensure that complainants are protected from any repercussions, reprisals or victimisation following a complaint being made.
- The Coordinator or staff will ensure all complaints are recorded in a complaints register, are reviewed, reported as appropriate, and used to improve the quality of service provided.

Fees and Charges

OBJECTIVE

- To ensure that clients are aware of fees and charges relating to provision of the service.
- To ensure that clients are not excluded from utilising the service in cases of financial hardship.

POLICY

- Fees charged for services provided by Mudgee Community Transport are recommended by the Coordinator in consultation with the Manager, Community Services and form part of the Fees and Charges which are developed within the Delivery Program and Operational Plan of Mid-Western Regional Council. These documents are placed on public exhibition with an open invitation for submissions from local residents. The Fees and Charges are presented to Council for approval as part of Council's public exhibition of the Operational Plan.
- Essential changes to charges requiring implementation prior to the close of the current financial year and therefore unable to await inclusion in the next Operational Plan are advertised for 28 days to allow public comment.
- Should a client have difficulty in meeting the cost of the service, they will be able to negotiate with the Coordinator a plan to suit their individual position.

- Based on the client's completion of the application for review of fees, the Coordinator will assess the client's ability to pay the standard fee and determine if special consideration is required, or if the client prefers.
- Should special consideration be required, the Coordinator should determine with client an option to suit their situation. This may be a time payment program, delayed payment, or another recommendation.
- In all circumstances during this process, the client's privacy and confidentiality will remain paramount, meaning that a decision be made in favour of the client rather than risk breaches or privacy and confidentiality.
- Should the client receive service which they cannot pay for, this will not exclude them from receiving service in the future.

Recruitment of Volunteer Drivers

OBJECTIVE

To recruit and train adequate numbers of volunteer drivers who will provide a mix of members who will enable the delivery and management of safe and quality care to Mudgee Community Transport..

POLICY

- The Coordinator will recruit suitable volunteer drivers through advertising and promotion of the service throughout the community.
- Each prospective volunteer driver will be interviewed and assessed to determine suitability for the role, and given information packs on the service.
- Each prospective volunteer driver will complete a National Criminal History Record Check Consent as well as other paperwork as required by the service and Transport for NSW from time to time.
- Volunteer driver Criminal History Record Checks will be undertaken once every three years.
- Prospective volunteer drivers will be offered orientation that will include:
 - Work Health & Safety
 - Tools for transport run sheets and tablets
 - The rights and responsibilities of volunteer drivers and clients
 - Trial runs with experienced volunteer drivers
- Volunteer drivers will be required to complete a driver application form, an emergency contacts form, an EFT form, roster preferences form, mobility parking declaration and a Volunteer Agreement.
- Training may be provided in the following:
 - First aid
 - Driver training courses conducted by accredited trainers.
 - Orientation training courses conducted by other local volunteer drivers
 - Volunteer training in manual handling and WHS conducted by accredited trainers
- All volunteer drivers must sign a Volunteer Agreement and are expected to comply with Council Polices.
- All volunteer drivers will attend quarterly meetings with the Coordinate that provide information, a review of operations and performance, training and consultation regarding the service.

RETIREMENT OF VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

- From a volunteer driver's 75th birthday onwards, driving for Community Transport is subject to annual Service NSW licence renewals, annual medical reviews and functional testing, as well as Community Transport's discretion.

- The appropriateness of trip assignment to certain drivers will be at the discretion of the Coordinator.
- A volunteer driver is to advise the Coordinator in writing on his/her anniversary date, or at any time throughout the year, if applicable, of any changes or fluctuations in medical conditions that may prevent him/her (or cause him/her to be recommended not to drive by a medical practitioner) from legally driving. Further, the volunteer must provide evidence of a medical practitioner's subsequent clearance to drive prior to them returning to volunteer for Community Transport.

Vehicle/Volunteer Records

OBJECTIVE

To ensure an efficient record system is in place to provide up-to-date data on all Mudgee Community Transport vehicles and volunteer drivers.

POLICY

- The Coordinator is responsible for keeping up-to-date records on all vehicles and drivers used in the delivery of Mudgee Community Transport services.
- Each vehicle will have a file detailing information including:
 - Seating, luggage capacity and accessibility features.
 - Records of damage/accidents/insurance claim forms
- Volunteer drivers are required to provide, upon request, all necessary compliance records and certifications, as required from time to time.
- Each volunteer driver will have a file recording:
 - All relevant driver license information.
 - Current residential and postal addresses.
 - Current telephone number.
 - Relevant skills and training records.
 - Relevant medical details.
 - Police check report, including expiry date.
 - Working with Children Check clearance (where relevant).
 - Consent for licensing checks to be conducted on an annual basis.

Personal Presentation for Volunteer Drivers

OBJECTIVE

Whilst representing Mudgee Community Transport, each volunteer shall be responsible for ensuring that their standards of personal presentation are maintained to a level which is appropriate to their responsibilities within the organisation.

POLICY

- Neat, casual clothing shall be worn whilst on duty. This clothing shall be appropriate to the occupational health and safety considerations of the individual work responsibilities of each team member, for example:
 - Sturdy comfortable footwear shall be worn at all times (no thongs).
 - Hats and other appropriate protection against sun damage shall be worn whilst outside the vehicle.

- Volunteer drivers have the option of wearing a polo shirt with the Mudgee Community Transport logo in the summer months as well as a jacket for the cooler months. These items of clothing will be purchased from Service funds and must not be worn when undertaking non-service activities.
- Personal hygiene shall be maintained to a standard which reasonably minimises any risk of offence to passengers or team members.
- No items of clothing or accessories shall be worn whilst representing the organisation which may be offensive to any passenger or other team member, for example:
 - Tee-shirts with political or religious slogans.
 - Badges or jewellery with contentious or potentially inflammatory insignia or symbols.
- Mudgee Community Transport places no general restrictions upon the jewellery or hairstyles worn by individual team members except that they must not present a safety hazard.

Disciplinary Measures for Volunteer Drivers

OBJECTIVE

In order to maintain high standards within Mudgee Community Transport, and to ensure safety standards are kept as a paramount priority, volunteer drivers will be subject to the same disciplinary measures as are applicable to employed team members.

POLICY

- Where a volunteer driver's work performance or conduct is considered unsatisfactory, the volunteer driver will be informed in the first instance of the nature of the unsatisfactory performance or conduct and of the required standard to be achieved.
- Unsatisfactory work performance or conduct shall include, but is not limited to, neglect of duties, breach of discipline, absenteeism and non-compliance with safety standards and funding body requirements.
- A written record shall be kept on the volunteer driver's electronic personnel file of any initial warning.
- Where there is reoccurrence of unsatisfactory work performance or conduct, the volunteer driver will be warned in writing by the Coordinator. Counselling will reinforce the standard of work or conduct expected and, where the volunteer is failing to meet those standards, a suitable review period for monitoring his or her performance, the severity of the situation, and whether disciplinary action will follow should the volunteer driver's work performance or conduct not improve.
- If the volunteer driver's unsatisfactory work performance or conduct continues or resumes following the formal warning and counselling, the volunteer driver shall be given a final warning in writing giving notice of disciplinary action should the unsatisfactory work performance or conduct not cease immediately.
- If the volunteer driver's work performance or conduct does not improve after the final warning further disciplinary action may be taken or the volunteer driver may be relieved of his or her driving duties.

Smoking Policy

OBJECTIVE

To minimise the risk of tobacco related injuries and illnesses to both clients and drivers who use Mudgee Community Transport.

POLICY

- Mudgee Community Transport does acknowledge that some team members and clients may either choose to smoke or may be presently unable to overcome the strong addictive properties of nicotine.
- In consideration of these facts the following shall apply:
 - No team member or client shall smoke in the Mudgee Community Transport office or vehicle, and per Council's 'Smoke Free Outdoors Area' Policy, or within 10 metres of a Council building.
 - No team member shall have a "cigarette break" which results in any danger to a passenger, team member or member of the general public (e.g. leaving vulnerable clients unattended).
- This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the relevant Mid-Western Regional Council policies relating to Smoke Free Outdoor Area Policy which have been developed within the guidelines of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Workplace Health and Safety Policy

OBJECTIVE

A healthy and safe working environment for staff, volunteers and clients within the Mudgee Community Transport Service is considered to be of the utmost importance.

POLICY

- All employees, volunteers and clients are required to comply within the WHS Guidelines as set out within the Mid-Western Regional Council Work Health and Safety Policy together with all other relevant policies, procedures and Safe Work Method Statements as developed within Council's guidelines, and any requirements deemed appropriate by Transport for NSW and the Point to Point Transport Commission.
- Where possible, it is the policy of the Mudgee Community Transport Service to operate during daylight hours. To achieve this objective, bookings will only be accepted for transport during daylight hours, in recognition of our commitment to the safety of our volunteer drivers and our clients.
- In addition, for trips to Sydney (or other extended destinations), there will be a limit of two drop off/pick up addresses per trip. Only with the approval of the Coordinator (or nominated team member) may an additional stop be scheduled, having regard to the proximity of the additional address to the priority booked in time drop off/pick up addresses. Further, a Sydney run sheet/tablet should be prepared in order to ensure that adequate time is set aside for the driver to have sufficient time out of the vehicle during the day to alleviate any potential physical and/or mental fatigue.
- Where any driver is of the opinion that he or she may struggle with any journey (due to fatigue, illness or any other reason), he or she must make the Coordinator aware of this fact and arrangements will be made to replace the driver for that trip. There may be some instances of regional travel (including Sydney trips) where it may be appropriate for two drivers to be scheduled on for a trip in order that the driving be shared and all drivers are to be made aware that this is a reasonable request and one that should be made to the Coordinator as soon as practicable prior to the commencement of the journey.

Manual Lifting and Handling

OBJECTIVE

- To ensure that employees and volunteers are adequately trained in manual handling techniques so that in the day to day provision of services they are able to safely undertake a range of routine and ad-hoc lifting and manual handling activities.
- Manual lifting and handling activities include both the general handling of office, vehicle and mobility equipment and assisting passengers to use Mudgee Community Transport services. Poor lifting and handling practices constitute a major threat to the health and safety of team members and passengers.

POLICY

- All Mudgee Community Transport team members shall accomplish safe lifting and handling of passengers, equipment and any other items by undertaking the following analysis of each task to determine an appropriate course of action.
- Instances where risks arising from routine or ad-hoc lifting and handling tasks have been identified shall be notified to the Coordinator.

ASSISTING PASSENGERS WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS

- Assisting passengers who use wheelchairs to get up or down kerbs and steps may be an essential part of helping them to use the Mudgee Community Transport service. This is an area where extreme care is needed to ensure the safety of both passengers and volunteers.
- It is unfortunately common for passengers who use wheelchairs to require assistance up or down a number of steps. Where no ramps, lifts or other accessibility arrangements as exist, this task can seldom be accomplished by Mudgee Community Transport team members without considerable care and planning
- Even where a team member may have the physical strength and agility to successfully assist a person using a wheelchair up or down a number of steps, there is rarely any margin for error and always a great deal of risk involved.
- To ensure the safety of both passengers and team members, the following shall apply to all Community Transport services:
 - No Community Transport team member shall attempt to provide assistance to a person using a wheelchair to negotiate more than two steps (up or down) at any one time where there is no level resting area in between.
 - Where passengers who use wheelchairs require assistance to negotiate more than two steps (up or down) the Coordinator or nominated team member shall be responsible for ensuring that:
 - Enquiries regarding accessibility by other means (other entrances, ramps etc.) have been made on accepting booking.
 - Appropriately trained personnel equipped with suitable specialist equipment are obtained to assist the passenger, and/or
 - Where client consent is provided, referrals are made to relevant agencies (for home modifications, for example) to overcome the problem.

TRAINING

- Community Transport shall ensure that adequate information and training on the implementation.
- Application of safe lifting and handling techniques is made available to all team members.

Inspection and Maintenance of Vehicles

OBJECTIVE

Ensuring that all vehicles are fully functional prior to each journey is an absolute priority in the delivery of the Mudgee Community Transport Service.

POLICY

- At the commencement of each day's operation, any vehicle and all equipment to be used in a Mudgee Community Transport service shall be inspected to ensure that it is clean, safe and in good working order. A pre-start check will be required via the vehicle tablet. A further post-trip check will be required via the vehicle tablet.
- At each handover, the new driver shall as a minimum, conduct a walk round inspection of the vehicle and, as far as is practicable, conduct a full vehicle and equipment inspection.
- Any defects or faults are to be reported using the community transport vehicle check list form or online via the vehicle tablet.
- No Mudgee Community Transport vehicle shall be used in a service where inspection has resulted in the identification of a safety defect which is not considered acceptable (or roadworthy, for want of a better term) pursuant to Light Vehicles Standards Rules within Schedule 2 of the *Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2017* (NSW).
- The Coordinator is responsible for the arrangement of routine service inspections through the Council Workshop.
- The Coordinator is responsible for arranging services in line with the manufacturers' guidelines together with repairs/replacement of tyres and other consumables.

Use of Seatbelts in Vehicles

OBJECTIVE

Mudgee Community Transport is committed to ensuring the safety and comfort of all its clients and recognises the essential function of client safety equipment in this area.

POLICY

- All passengers and team members, except where a valid medical exemption is provided, are required to utilise appropriate safety equipment which may include seatbelts, child seats, child harnesses. Should a medical exemption be in place, the client is required to present this exemption to the Coordinator in each instance of travel, acknowledging that client circumstances may change).
- Wherever practicable, team members shall be responsible for ensuring prior to service commencement that passenger safety equipment appropriate to the safety needs of each passenger is:
 - Available in sufficient quantity.
 - Clean and in good working order.
- Whilst National Child Restraint Laws provide guidance for children at particular age milestones, there is flexibility where children may be too small for child restraints specified for their ages. Because of this, and because of Mudgee Community Transport's limited knowledge of specific child clients and their growth rates, the service is unable to always provide appropriate restraints. The provision of child restraints and the responsibility for fitting the restraint will be the responsibility of the carer travelling with the child.
- All safety harnesses must comply with the current rules and regulations set by Service NSW from time to time.
- Volunteer drivers shall be responsible for ensuring that all appropriate safety

- equipment is utilised by passengers and is correctly fitted and secure.
- Volunteer drivers shall be responsible for ensuring that all passenger safety equipment is safely and neatly secured within vehicles when not in use.

Carriage of Mobility Aids and Goods in Vehicles

OBJECTIVE

Mudgee Community Transport is committed to ensuring the safety and comfort of all its volunteer drivers and passengers and recognises the dangers presented by incorrectly or poorly stowed items in its vehicles.

POLICY

- No item shall be carried within a Mudgee Community Transport vehicle in a manner which will allow it to become a missile within the vehicle in the event of sudden deceleration (eg. an accident).
- No item shall be carried within a Mudgee Community Transport vehicle in a manner which will allow it to block an entrance, exit or emergency exit or the driver's view of the road and surrounding traffic, pedestrians, signs, etc.
- Wherever practicable, items will be carried within the boot of the vehicle.
- An oxygen cylinder can only be carried in the vehicle if it is in the leather harness which can be strapped to the back of the front passenger seat.
- A gopher/scooter may be secured using the wheelchair straps in the appropriate Mudgee Community Transport vehicle however, no client can remain seated in their gopher/scooter when being transported. The client must be able to transfer to a fixed passenger seat. Should the gopher/scooter require operation to move the gopher/scooter in and out of the vehicle, this will be the responsibility of the client or carer, not the driver or staff. This only applies to gophers/scooters that can be safely secured using the wheelchair restraints already fitted in the vehicle around the frame thus incurring minimal movement of the device.
- All wheelchairs being carried need to be secured in accordance with Australian Standards AS3696.19.2009 and the instructions outlined in the vehicle and other instruction manuals (where appropriate).

Vehicle Accidents or Breakdowns

OBJECTIVE

Despite Mudgee Community Transport's best efforts, vehicles do from time to time suffer from mechanical breakdowns. Mechanical breakdowns may include both faults which may render a vehicle inoperable and faults which may render a vehicle unsafe. In such cases, ensuring the safety and comfort of Mudgee Community Transport passengers, and affecting a swift return to normal service are our highest priorities.

POLICY

- In the event of a notifiable injury, illness or incident (including mechanical breakdown) immediate action will be taken by team members to minimise danger to passengers and to ensure their comfort, such action shall include:
 - Check for any danger to him or herself, any passengers or others.
 - Call for help, administer first aid all call 000 (or 112) if required.
 - Moving the vehicle to a safe position (away from traffic) where possible.
 - Where the vehicle cannot be moved, assisting passengers to move to a safe location.

- Where the electronic ramp fails in the wheelchair accessible vehicle, follow the operators manual for manual release of the wheelchair ramp (copy in vehicle, where relevant).
 - Utilising appropriate safety equipment to minimise risk.
 - Monitoring the wellbeing of passengers.
 - Keeping passengers informed of developments.
- The Coordinator or nominated team member shall be notified of the notifiable injury, illness or incident immediately and then kept informed of any further developments. The Coordinator or nominated team member will then immediately notify the Mid-Western Regional Council's Work Health & Safety Coordinator and potentially, Transport for NSW (where relevant).
- Where the Coordinator or a nominated team member cannot be contacted, team member/s delivering the service shall, utilising the Emergency Contacts listed in the vehicle information log, determine a course of action leading to:
 - Passengers being conveyed safely to their destination.
 - The vehicle being recovered and conveyed to an approved repair facility.
 - Obtaining a relief vehicle where necessary.
- Where alternate transport is organised to convey passengers to their destination, every effort shall be made to try to ensure that it is suited to the mobility needs of those passengers.
- The Coordinator will oversee the notification next of kin, family, carers and/or "emergency contacts" where significant delays of service will affect expected arrival plans or arrangements.
- In the event of a near hit, incident or injury, the volunteer driver is to :
 - Check for any danger to him or herself, any passengers or others.
 - Call for help, administer first aid all call 000 (or 112) if required.
 - Notify the Coordinator or nominated team member immediately. The Coordinator or nominated team member will then immediately notify the Mid-Western Regional Council's Work Health & Safety Coordinator and Transport for NSW (if relevant).
 - Complete an Incident Report Form and deliver it to the Coordinator within 24 hours of the incident/accident.
- Any Mudgee Community Transport vehicle which has developed a mechanical fault which renders it not roadworthy shall be withdrawn from service until the fault has been rectified and inspected by an authorised vehicle repairer.

Fleet Policy

OBJECTIVE

To ensure the safe and efficient operation of the Mudgee Community Transport vehicle fleet.

To maintain the vehicles in the best possible condition in order to present the vehicles in a condition which allows minimum changeover costs thus keeping within the parameters of the budgetary constraints as set by the funding provided from the external funding bodies.

POLICY

The Coordinator will:

- order the replacement vehicles in line with the Funding Agreement with Transport for NSW and Council's Light Fleet and Procurement Policies and ensure payment is made in a timely manner.
- ensure that the vehicles are maintained as per the manufacturers' guidelines by undertaking the booking of services and all other maintenance items as

required.

- ensure that the vehicles are kept clean and in good condition at all times in order to achieve the best possible value for the vehicle upon changeover.
- ensure that the tyres on the vehicles are maintained and/or replaced in line with the level of roadworthiness required by the relevant regularity authorities.
- have any damage to vehicles assessed immediately and repairs carried out as soon as practicable to ensure the continued good condition of the vehicles.
- follow the guidelines as provided by Mid-Western Regional Council when dealing with any insurance claims and provide the relevant information to the Insurance Company or staff within Council as directed.