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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 carer's.

Legislative requirements

- Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Community Services (Complaints Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW)
- Disability Service Standards (NSW) and National Standards for Disability Services 2013
- Aged Care Act 1997 (CTH)
- Work Health and Safety Act and Regulation 2011
- Privacy Act 1988
- Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000
- Archives Act 1983 and Statute Law Revision Act (No.1) 2016
- Passenger Transport Act 1990 (NSW)
- Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicle) Regulation 2017
- Road Rules (NSW)

Related policies and plans

- Community Care Common Care Standards
- Statement of Rights and Responsibilities (1990)
- Charter of Rights and Responsibilities Community Care (2017)
- Transport for NSW Accreditation Standards for Operators of Community Transport Services
- Transport for NSW Annual Funding Agreement with Mid-Western Regional Council dated 30 August 2016
- Transport Roads & Maritime Services Rules and Regulations National Privacy Principles
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Workplace Health & Safety Policy
- Light Fleet Procedure
- Purchase of Goods and Service Procedure
- Gifts and Benefits Policy
- Financial Resources Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Smoke Free Outdoor Area Policy

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 choices in their own lives through, *inter alia*, 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.
- The right of people to access services on a non-discriminatory basis without prejudice because of gender, marital status, religious or cultural beliefs, political affiliation, particular disability, ethnic background, age, sexual preference, HIV status, inability to pay or geographic location.
- The right of the community to safe, comfortable and reliable services.
- The right of the community to accountable and responsive services.

Outcomes

The outcomes pursued by Mudgee Community Transport shall be:

- That people who are transport disadvantaged can live independently and with dignity within their community.
- That people who are frail aged and elderly, people who have disabilities and their carer's are appropriately supported where they choose to live in their own homes.
- 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.
- People with disabilities and their carer's.
- People who are at risk of premature or inappropriate institutionalisation.
- People who are transport disadvantaged.
- People from culturally distinct communities.
- People who are financially 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 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.
 - 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 the Community Care Common Care Standards and the requirements of the annual 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 group 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 Services and the Coordinator. The process includes:

- Mid-Western Regional Council will appoint a Service Coordinator ('the 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 will be the responsibility of the Coordinator in accordance with the signed Role Profile and 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, State and Local 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.
- Report 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 MDS reports and other statistical data are submitted in a timely manner.

Clients' Rights and Responsibilities

Objective

- Clients of the Service and their carer's 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 carer's understand their responsibilities to the Service and the volunteers providing the transport 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 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, carer's, 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 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 road rules.
- 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.
- Food and drink (with the exception of bottled water) are not to be consumed in the service vehicles.

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 Service will endeavour to ensure that transport is available to the frail-aged, people with disabilities and their carer's 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 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 group through referrals from:

- Medical practioner.
- Hospital or any health or welfare service.
- A relative, friend, carer or neighbour.
- My Aged Care
- NDIS
- The person requiring the service.

Target Groups

- Within the targeted population there are a number of special needs groups:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
 - People from non-English speaking backgrounds.
 - People with dementia.
 - Financially disadvantaged persons.
 - People living in rural and remote areas.
- Clients must comply with regulations set down within Transport for NSW and Roads & Maritime Services 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 (Department of Health).
- 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.

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 temporary or permanent withdrawal from the service may be made by the client or advocate to the Coordinator at any time (preferably in writing).
- The service may be withdrawn from the client if the Client Responsibilities as listed in the Client Rights and Responsibilities section are not met.
- 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 Pricing and Guidelines brochure and behaves in a manner which does not respect the rights of other clients and the Community Transport staff and volunteers.
- A client may be withdrawn from the service if the client fails/refuses to comply with regulations set down within Transport Roads & Maritime Services guidelines or any other regulatory body.

- Before service is withdrawn, a letter will be forwarded 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 Mudgee Community Transport 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 *privacy amendment (private sector) act 2000*, the *archives act 1983*, and *statute law revision act (No. 1) 2016*, 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 phone.
- 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, fax or email. Only those records relevant to the referral recipient's services shall be passed on.
- Access to client files will be only by Mid-Western Regional 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 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).
- Team members, upon becoming aware of a trauma possibly being experienced by a client, shall confidentially notify the Coordinator or his/her delegate if he/she is unavailable. The Coordinator shall in turn, with due regard for the privacy and wishes of the concerned client, promptly notify an appropriate carer, family member or professional agency.
- 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:
 - Assess the client's need for immediate medical attention and if required, ensure that it is provided;
 - 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;
 - Where necessary contact family members, the client's general practitioner and other community services involved;
 - Report all suspected or confirmed cases of abuse to the Mid-Western Regional Council's Work Health & Safety Coordinator; and
 - Once investigated, the Manager and Coordinator will determine if there is a legal 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 Mid-Western Regional Council's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
- 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:
 - No client shall be left unattended in an unsafe or inappropriate environment.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Wherever practicable, the Coordinator or nominated team member shall be immediately notified of the situation.
 - Immediate communication will be made with "emergency contacts" (identified during client assessment) in order to resolve the situation.
 - 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).
- 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 (eg. perhaps the intended client was seen leaving).
- 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 shall 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 (eg. destination venue) in order to establish the whereabouts of the client.
- Where doubt continues to exist regarding the client's wellbeing, appropriate authorities including the police shall be informed of the need for immediate action.

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 (eg. 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, contact police (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 Universal Precautions Procedures (NB. Gloves provided in vehicle first aid or Universal Precautions Kit should always be worn when providing first aid).

- 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 (eg. ambulance).
 - delivering first-aid to their best ability.
 - minimising distress to other clients.
 - conveying the client to an appropriate source of assistance (eg. hospital).
 - notifying the Coordinator or nominated team member 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.

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.
- Team members shall inform the Coordinator, as soon as possible, if they suspect that they may be affected by a minor infectious illness and the Coordinator will adjust the roster 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 Universal Precautions Kits and First Aid Kits which shall be replenished after each use.

- Team members shall at all time, use the Universal Precautions Kit equipment to isolate, remove, cleanse and disinfect 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' run sheets.

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

- Team members 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.
- The Coordinator or nominated team member shall be promptly notified of lost property items and relevant details shall be entered into the Mudgee Community Transport Lost Property Book.
- 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 in accordance with Mid-Western Regional Council policy and the means of disposal noted in the Community Transport Lost Property Book.
- Claims of ownership of unidentified lost property shall be verified through the claimants' description of the item prior to their viewing or inspecting it.

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 a 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. If the matter

needs to be referred to the Manager, Community Services, then the complaint must be made in writing.

- A letter acknowledging receipt of a written complaint should be forwarded within seven (7) working days.
- A follow-up letter is to be forwarded to the complainant when action has been completed.
- If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the service user should raise the matter directly with the Director, Community of Mid-Western Regional Council.

These items should be read in conjunction with the Policies and Procedures, as developed by Mid-Western Regional Council with particular reference to the Complaints Policy.

- If after the above 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

- The Coordinator is to ensure that complainants are protected from any repercussions, reprisals or victimisation following a complaint being made.

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 one month 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, or consult with a financial counsellor.
- 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, refer client to financial counsellor.
- Should special consideration be required, the Coordinator or financial counsellor should determine with client an option to suit their situation. This may be a time payment program, delayed payment, or another recommendation from financial counsellor.
- 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 competent service to the clients of Mudgee Community Transport.

Policy

- The Coordinator will recruit volunteer drivers through advertising and promotion of the Service throughout the community.
- Each prospective volunteer driver will be interviewed 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.
- The Coordinator will inform the volunteer as soon as the Record Check has been returned.
- Prospective volunteer drivers will be offered orientation that will include:
 - Work Health & Safety
 - Tools for transport run sheets and GPS navigation
 - The rights and responsibilities of volunteer drivers
 - Trial runs with an experienced volunteer driver

- 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 the Community Transport Policies.

RETIREMENT OF VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

- From a volunteer driver's 75th birthday onwards, driving for Community Transport is subject to annual Roads & Maritime Services licence renewals, annual medical reviews and functional testing, as well as Community Transport's discretion. Restrictions will be placed on the volunteer driver, limiting their travelling radius from Mudgee to Lithgow, Dubbo, Bathurst and Orange.
- Every effort will be made by Community Transport to limit the length of scheduled trips for those volunteer drivers beyond 75 years old.
- 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.
 - Registration and insurance renewal/expiry dates.
 - Records of damage/accidents/insurance claim forms
 - Restraint obligations (for wheelchairs, walkers).

- 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.
 - Notes regarding passenger compatibility.
 - Relevant medical details.

Personal Presentation for Volunteer Drivers

Objective

Whilst representing Mudgee Community Transport, each team member 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.
- 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.
- 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 (eg. leaving vulnerable clients unattended).
 - Arrangements shall be made to provide reasonable "cigarette breaks" for both clients and team members where the lack of such "cigarette breaks" may affect the efficient delivery and/or receipt of safe and comfortable services.
- 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

The workplace provides a healthy and safe working environment for staff, volunteers and clients within the Mudgee Community Transport Service are 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.

Further compliance is required under:

- CTO Occupational Health & Safety Manual – 2003.
- Disability Services Occupational Health & Safety Project Report – October 2006.

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 should be prepared in order to ensure that adequate time is set aside for the driver to have at least one hour 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.

The above items should be read in conjunction with Mid-Western Regional Council's policies and procedures.

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 Mudgee Community Transport's services. This is an area where extreme care is needed to ensure the safety of both passengers and team members.
- 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 (eg.Home Modifications) 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.
- Reference: CTO Manual Handling Training Program – 2005.

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.
- 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.
- No Mudgee Community Transport vehicle shall be used in a service where inspection has resulted in the identification of a safety defect which renders it not roadworthy within the definition of NSW Road Transport Regulations.
- 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. Mudgee Community Transport shall therefore equip all its vehicles with safety equipment appropriate to the needs of all, including small children and people who use mobility aids.

Policy

- All passengers and team members, except where a valid medical exemption is provided, are required 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.
- Parents and guardians seeking transport for children that require specific safety harnesses (such as booster seats or baby capsules) in the vehicles are required to provide the specific safety harnesses themselves. Mudgee Community Transport is unable to track infant and children's sizes and, therefore, the onus must be on the infant or child's parent or guardian to do so and select the appropriate safety equipment accordingly.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/carer of the child to fit the individual safety harness.
- All safety harnesses must comply with the current rules and regulations set by Transport Roads & Maritime Services at the time.
- Team members shall be responsible for ensuring that all appropriate safety equipment is utilised by passengers and is correctly fitted and secure.
- Team members 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 team members 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.
- 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. There is a leather harness available in the Mudgee Community Transport office for such a purpose.

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 a 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 Freedom Van Operators Manual V1.09.4 (copy in vehicle).

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 falls in the wheelchair accessible vehicle, following the Freedom Van Operators Manual V1.09.4 for manual release of the wheelchair ramp (copy in vehicle).
 - 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.
- 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 ensure that it is suited to the mobility needs of those passengers.
- All vehicle breakdowns shall be recorded in the Mudgee Community Transport Vehicle Check List Sheet and an Incident Report Form needs to be completed by the volunteer driver and delivered to the Coordinator.
- 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.
 - Complete and 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 Mid-Western Regional Council's Procurement Policy 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all Mid-Western Regional Council Policy documents with particular reference to, Fleet Management, Procurement, Insurance and any other relevant documents.