

11 March 2019

Ms Jodi McKay, MP  
Shop 2, 36 – 38 Victoria Street  
Burwood NSW 2134  
[strathfield@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:strathfield@parliament.nsw.gov.au)



Dear Ms McKay,

**RE: Transport disadvantage in regional NSW**

Thank you for your interest late last year in NCOSS' work advocating for improved community transport for regional NSW.

Labor's election pledges to provide free public transport to children under 16, and review greater Sydney train timetables are positive approaches to help many families access schools and other essential services. However, for many people affected by transport disadvantage, particularly in regional NSW, these policies will not have an impact.

Solutions to transport disadvantage throughout NSW need to be equitable, systemic, cost efficient and sustainable.

Achieving a fully accessible transport system and improved conditions for community transport providers are key recommendations of the [Building Great Communities](#) campaign, which is shining a light on the solutions that will improve the lives of those who are doing it tough and being left behind in a prosperous NSW. The campaign has a focus on policies which will build strong, safe, inclusive and accessible communities that celebrate diversity and where everyone can thrive. The Building Great Communities alliance of NSW peak bodies is **calling for certainty and funding for community transport providers.**

At a current cost of about \$9.5 million per year to the State Government, the NSW Community Transport Program supports people isolated by transport disadvantage. Community transport increases community and social inclusion by connecting people of all ages to vital hubs and services, particularly in regional and remote NSW.

However, community transport providers are facing several compounding challenges:

- NDIS is insufficiently funding and increasing demand for community transport.
- Aged care reforms are proving complex and costly to administer.
- Current funding arrangements end in 2020: providers need certainty.
- Service contracts disadvantage community transport providers.

Further detail on each of these issues is provided in the brief attached to this letter.

Community transport organisations are the experts in their communities. NCOSS is asking that these organisations are provided more independence and adequate resources. Improving the

situation of community transport for regional and remote residents of NSW could cost of less than \$24 million each year – **a quarter of the cost of the Coalition’s proposed Seniors Transport Card.**

On behalf of the NSW community transport and broader community services sector NCOSS is asking whether a NSW Labor Government will:

- commit to long-term funding for the NSW Community Transport Program, including an increase in funds for service providers by 20 per cent each year for five years;
- work with TfNSW on streamlining and clarifying contractual requirements for community transport providers, including asset ownership and the ability for these providers to independently manage their fleets in response to local need; and
- pledge to consult with the community transport sector on designing place-based arrangements so that resources in a particular location can be more flexibly deployed to meet local needs?

After all, NSW Labor’s commendable election pledges on public spaces, cultural funds and health and mental health infrastructure will only benefit people in regional NSW if they can access them.

We would like to understand your position on these matters and will share this with our networks and stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Joanna Quilty in cursive script.

Joanna Quilty  
Chief Executive Officer