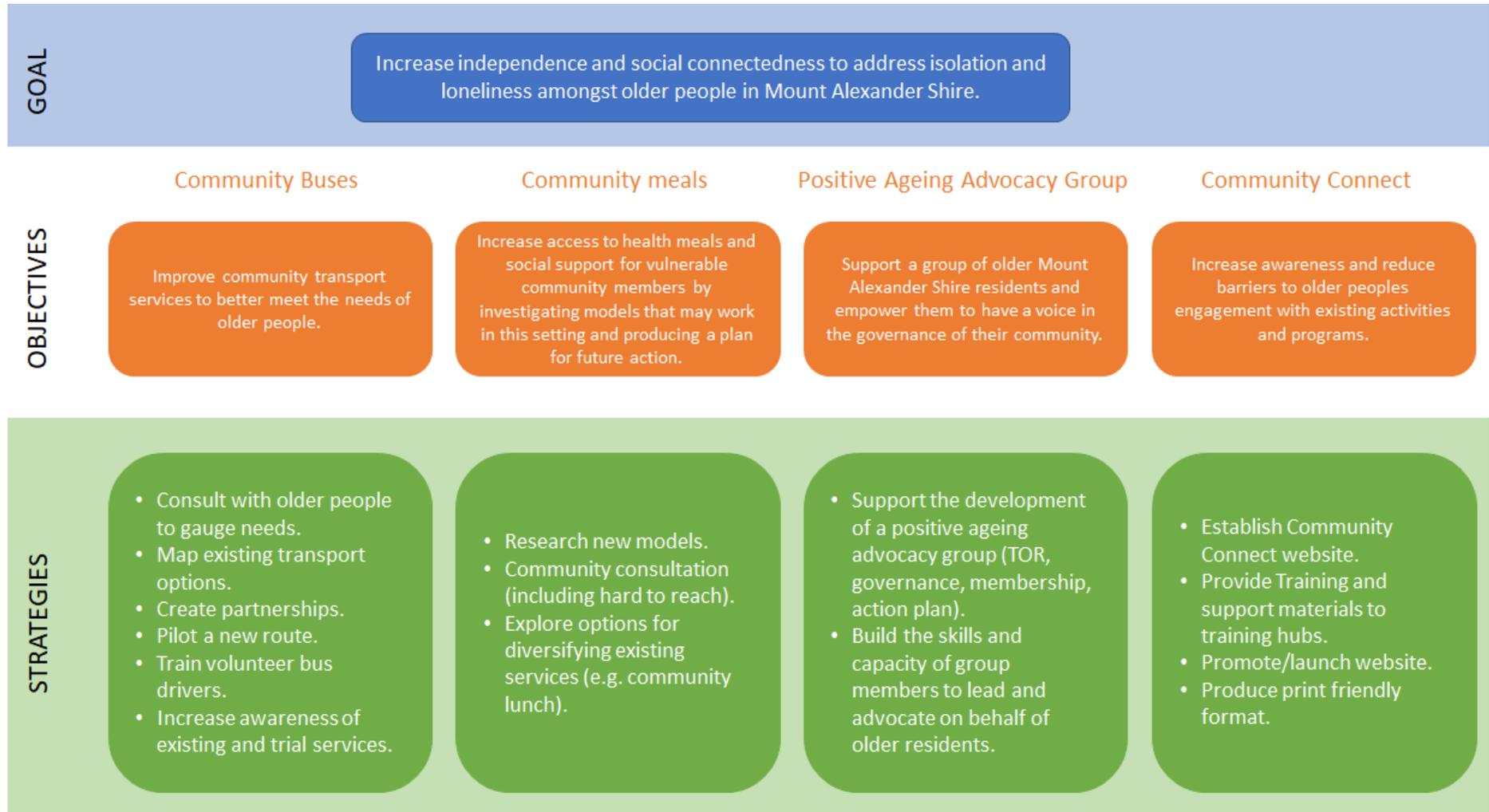


# AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES - Mount Alexander

## Program logic and Evaluation Framework



## Community buses

Improve community transport services to better meet the needs of older people.

Activities	Measures	Methods of measurement
Strategy 1: Collaborative model		
-snapshot mapping of current services	-mapping complete	
-transport needs survey	-No responses, survey results informed project, pre/post change in transport needs	survey
-Creating partnerships	-No of members, No of activities, failed partnerships, benefits and value of partnership in achieving goals	Document audit Meeting minutes Survey/interview
-working group	-members satisfied with process e.g. felt heard/included, -No meetings -Attendance	Document audit Meeting minutes Survey/interview
-volunteer bus driver training	-participation -increased skills -increased understanding of goals	Document audit survey
-pilot new route	-participation (community users) -driver feedback -user feedback (re: route, timetable, increased overall awareness, new to buses, quality/comfort/driving)	Documentation Survey
Strategy 2: Increase awareness of trial and existing services		
-media (radio/print)	-reach -general feedback -led to participation	Documentation Survey
-partnerships	See above	See above
<b>TOOLS required</b> Pre-survey – Community Post-survey – Community Survey/Most significant change story – working group Survey – drivers (training and pilot route) Survey – pilot users		

## **Executive summary**

The *Better Community Buses* project successfully developed a pilot community transport service in Mount Alexander based on surveys conducted on local transport services and transport needs of older people in Mount Alexander. The *Better Community Buses* project worked collaboratively with older people to help develop and deliver a twelve-week pilot service and a brochure with information for the community about local transport options.

The *Better Community Buses* Working Group recommends the following:

- The Community Bus service which has been trialled within Baringhup, Maldon and Castlemaine should continue into the future and be expanded to include Chewton, Campbells Creek, Barkers Creek and Wesley Hill.
- A regular Community Transport Forum led by Mount Alexander Shire Council should be held to encourage collaboration between transport providers.
- Mount Alexander Shire Council undertake to review the currency of information included in the transport brochure annually and to make this available on the Council website.
- Access to the Council buses should be improved so that the community can easily use them.

The challenges that were encountered included insufficient time to develop strong partnerships with health services to support the Patient Transport trial and resistance from Newstead RTC to participate in the Community Transport service trial.

## **Introduction**

This report is an evaluation of the *Better Community Buses* project which comprised the following key activities:

- Transport Snapshot mapping
- Transport Needs survey
- Creating partnerships
- Working Group
- Volunteer bus driver training
- Pilot new service
- Increase awareness of transport services

We have used surveys and document audits to evaluate the success of these activities. This evaluation forms part of the final report to Mount Alexander Council on the implementation of the Age Friendly Communities project led by Maldon Neighbourhood Centre and Castlemaine Community House. This report will guide the direction of Age Friendly programs into the future as well as provide recommendations to Mount Alexander Council to sustain community transport services in the Shire.

## Findings and discussion

### Working Group & Creating Partnerships

We established a Working Group to oversee the community transport project (*Better Community Buses*) within the over-arching Age Friendly Communities project. The Working Group had representation from U3A, CDCH, Baringhup Bus committee, Maldon Neighbourhood Centre, Castlemaine Community House and the seniors' community.

Significant investment was made to develop partnerships with local transport providers. We received strong support for our community transport trial from the local bus service contracted by PTV- Whitmores Bus Lines. Other local community transport providers did not choose to participate in the project. It was difficult to establish a service in partnership with local health services due to their insufficient resources.

### Transport Snapshot mapping

A Transport Snapshot Survey was developed by the Working Group based on a survey conducted in 2011 to map the transport resources in Mount Alexander Shire. We received responses from four providers of community transport and followed this up with 4 in-depth interviews.

We concluded the following to help guide the development of a pilot community service:

- A service (several days per week) to complement existing scheduled public transport e.g. Maldon to Castlemaine
- An additional service to Bendigo hospitals once or twice a week e.g. from Maldon/ Walmer/ Baringhup
- Services to medical/ hospital appointments in Castlemaine on a set day each week
- A service from low SES areas in Maldon, Castlemaine etc. (consult with MASC)

### Transport Needs survey

A Transport Needs survey was developed and distributed to the 65 + demographic in Mount Alexander Shire via Seniors groups, Probus, U3A etc. We received 39 responses. The survey responses did not provide a clear indication of a preferred route or schedule for transport in the Shire, however it was clear that Castlemaine is the hub for most residents and that a flexible service would meet more needs.

### Pilot Service and Volunteer bus driver training

The Working Group used information gathered from the Transport Snapshot survey and Transport Need survey to develop two pilot projects – Mount Alexander Community Bus service and a Patient Transport service in partnership with Lyttleton Street Medical Clinic.

Volunteer bus drivers were recruited and trained to run these services. Thirteen volunteer drivers attended RACV Driver Safety Training with a number also completing Applied First Aid certificates. Volunteer drivers were involved in creating the route and schedules. Eight participants returned surveys with all participants indicating they thought the content and teaching were excellent. In answer to the following question, "Did you improve your driver

safety skills and understanding?”, the majority of respondents indicated that they either improved or improved a lot.

The Community Transport Service ran for 12 weeks and conducted 161 passenger trips during this time. Twelve passengers completed on-board satisfaction surveys and 100% were satisfied with Bus Schedule, Bus Route, Passenger Comfort, Passenger Safety and Cost of service.

Nine passengers completed comprehensive surveys at the conclusion of the trial. Over 85% of passengers were satisfied with the service, with some passengers noting that the timetable was difficult to read and a more frequent service would be preferred. We have received many anecdotal comments that the service is invaluable and the drivers are very friendly.

A focus group was held with volunteer bus drivers at the conclusion of the trial. Drivers reported that more timetables should be available in the community and that they were difficult to interpret. Drivers suggested increasing the catchment area of the service to include towns and localities surrounding Castlemaine. All drivers reported that passengers were satisfied with the service and that they are happy to continue their volunteer service with the Maldon Neighbourhood Centre so that the service is sustained into the future.

The Patient Transport service was established relying on bookings from Reception at Lyttleton Street Medical Clinic. We did not receive any bookings for this service during the six-week trial period.

#### Increase awareness of transport services

The second strategy of the project was to provide information to the communities of Mount Alexander Shire about the transport options available. The Working Group collaboratively developed a brochure “Transport in Mount Alexander Shire” and 5000 copies were printed and have been progressively disseminated through community health services, local council, Neighbourhood Houses and transport providers.

The pilot service was promoted through four press releases in local papers (Midland Express, Castlemaine Mail, Tarrangower Times and Maldon Neighbourhood Centre Newsletters), via local and seniors radio, a printed timetable with magnet delivered to 4200 households in Maldon, Baringhup and Castlemaine, an information stall at Castlemaine Farmers market and Maldon Easter Fair and participation in the Maldon Easter Parade.

Representatives from the Working Group visited seven local seniors/community groups to provide information about the community bus service trial and to register interested bus passengers. Fifty bus passengers have been registered over the course of the service.

In conclusion, the *Better Community Buses* project was a success, engaging older people across the Shire in the development of an on-going community transport service and communicating local transport options to the community.

To ensure on-going success, the Working Group made a number of recommendations to the Age Friendly Communities Steering Committee as outlined below.

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations to Age Friendly Communities Steering Committee:

- The Community Bus service which has been trialled within Baringhup, Maldon and Castlemaine should continue into the future and be expanded to include Chewton, Campbells Creek, Barkers Creek and Wesley Hill.
- A regular Community Transport Forum led by Mount Alexander Shire Council should be held to encourage collaboration between transport providers.
- Mount Alexander Shire Council undertake to review the currency of information included in the transport brochure annually and to make this available on the Council website.
- Access to the Council buses should be improved so that the community can easily charter them.