

Council of Social Service of New South Wales

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25 September 2015

Submitted online at: <http://pointtopointtransport.nsw.gov.au/make-a-submission>

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Inquiry into Point to Point Transport

The NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the Inquiry into Point to Point Transport.

NCOSS works with and for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage to see positive change in our communities. With 80 years of knowledge and experience informing our vision, NCOSS is uniquely placed to bring together civil society to work with government and business to ensure communities in NSW are strong for everyone. As the peak body for health and community services in NSW we support the sector to deliver innovative services that grow and evolve as needs and circumstances evolve.

Wheelchair-accessible taxis (WATs)

NCOSS urges the Taskforce to ensure that any recommendations made do not reduce access to, or the reliability of, the WATs service. WATs provide a crucial means of transport for people with disability and this must be protected. NCOSS cautions against any restriction of the current incentives provided by the NSW Government to provide wheelchair-accessible services.

Impact on Community Transport Sector

NCOSS is deeply concerned about the impact of the Taskforce's discussion paper and subsequent recommendations on the community transport sector. Community transport provides a vital service to older people and people with disability who face barriers to accessing mainstream public transport. Any suggestion that community transport is operating unlawfully is misinformed. The *Passenger Transport Act 2014 (NSW)* s5(2) recognizes community transport as a public passenger service and community transport will be regulated under this Act when it comes into effect. NCOSS asks that, when formulating its recommendations, the Taskforce bears in mind the crucial role that community transport plays in the lives of vulnerable people.

Concessions

The Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS) is an important means of ensuring taxi affordability for people with disability. The majority of people using the TTSS have low

household incomes.¹ NCOSS encourages the Taskforce to consider the needs of people experiencing poverty and disadvantage and ensure that concessions are applicable to ridesharing services².

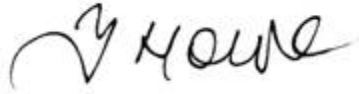
Social Inclusion

Accessible and affordable transport is a key component of social inclusion. New forms of point to point transport, such as ridesharing services, have the potential to improve transport access for people with disability and older people. NCOSS urges the Taskforce to take account of these people and their transport needs when making its recommendations.

NCOSS would welcome the opportunity to engage further with the Inquiry on the details of this submission.

Should you require further information, please contact John Mikelsons, NCOSS Deputy CEO, on 8960 7916 or via email at john@ncoss.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Howe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Tracy Howe
Chief Executive Officer

¹ Stancombe Research & Planning, 'Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Customer Research', conducted for Transport for NSW, 2013.

² This submission uses the same definition of 'ridesharing' as that used by the Taskforce in its Discussion Paper.