

Transport for young people with disabilities

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1 Introduction

This paper reports on a project which was conducted for a consortium of four Community Transport groups in South West Sydney. The project's aim was to identify the transport needs and travel patterns of Young People with Disabilities (YPWD) across the 7 local government areas of Bankstown, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Wingecarribee and Wollondilly. This is an area with a population of around 800,000 people. "Young People with Disabilities" are defined by Home and Community Care (HACC) for funding purposes, as people under 65 years of age, as opposed to their older frail aged clients who are over 65 years of age. The study included people with intellectual, mental and/or physical disabilities.

It is apparent that even though YPWD are part of the HACC target group which are eligible for Community Transport services, Community Transport predominantly provides services for the frail aged population (i.e. people over 65 years). For the four Community Transport groups participating in this project it was estimated that only a small proportion, around 15%, of their clients are YPWD. It is thought that this may reflect the fact that the transport needs of YPWD are different from those of the frail aged clients. However, there is very little, if any, data or information on the transport patterns and needs of YPWD. The project was designed to provide that information which could be used by the Community Transport groups to demonstrate the demand for resources for additional services.

2 Methodology

The project was conducted primarily by consultation, complemented with data from existing sources, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the National Disability Administrator's¹ (NDA) data sets which are derived from ABS data. Information was also collected through surveys of YPWD and/or their carers and group service providers working with YPWD. The ABS data was used to provide background data on the potential size of the population with a disability in the study area to give an indication of the extent of the need for transport services. However we believed that statistical data alone was not sufficient to understand the issues in this project and therefore we also used a range of qualitative approaches.

Given the wide range of groups and activities and the various needs of YPWD we needed to be flexible with the methodology used. We also needed to provide a number of ways for individuals, groups and organisations to contribute to the project so as to include the views and experiences of as many YPWD as possible.

Thus extensive consultations were conducted with YPWD and disability sector workers. These consultations were also supplemented with information collected through surveys of a larger sample of YPWD and workers. However this sample was not designed to be a representative sample of the population of YPWD. It was not possible, with the resources available for this project to attempt to conduct such a survey for this population.

2.1 Contacting Groups and YPWD

The steps in the methodology were:

- Identify contacts for the main service providers working with people with disabilities in the project area – this information was provided primarily by the members of the Project Working Party
- A pilot for the discussion format and information to be collected was first conducted with the groups in the Wingecarribee LGA.
- A wide range of providers and advocacy agencies for people with disabilities were contacted by letter to get better information on the number of people with disabilities and their needs in the project area. A list of relevant agencies and groups was compiled and while some of these were State or metropolitan wide organisations, they were able to refer us to relevant contacts in the project area and/or make general comments about the transport needs of their client group. An approach letter was sent to these organisations along with a short questionnaire to collect information on the number of YPWD that they provide services for, their type of disability and their transport needs. In total 80 organisations were contacted in this way.
- In addition 26 schools in the project area, which were either special needs schools or had programs for special needs students, were also contacted by letter and invited to participate in the project.
- Consultations were held with groups of YPWD and/or their carers which were conducted by various service providers throughout the project area.
- A short questionnaire was designed to collect information from YPWD and/or their carers who participated in the consultation groups. This questionnaire was also distributed to YPWD and/or their carers through the schools and organisations that agreed to participate in the project. The questionnaire collected data on the type of trips made by YPWD, transport used and their need for other trips. It was a simple format which could be completed by the YPWD with assistance if necessary from carers and group co-ordinators.
- A short questionnaire was also used to collect information from the service providers of the group discussions that were attended to collect information on the type of services provided, the numbers of clients on their books and their transport needs.

2.2 Other Data and Information

- Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the population of YPWD, both State wide and in the project area, was analysed. This is reported in Section 3 of this paper.
- Information was also compiled on existing transport services in each LGA, including both mainstream transport services and the services currently provided for people with disabilities. This was important in identifying and understanding the current level of suitable services available for people with disabilities and the gaps in service provision.
- Other transport service options which might be available to the Community Transport groups, such as working with the local bus companies and developing taxi voucher schemes, were also explored.

3 Background data

This section draws on available data, primarily from the ABS, to quantify the number of people with a disability, firstly in NSW as a whole, and then in the 7 local government areas of the study. This is the most comprehensive data available to help us understand the numbers of people with disabilities and their needs. While it may not be possible to say with complete accuracy the actual number of people with a disability who are in need of transport services, we have used the data which is available to give some indication of the potential magnitude of the numbers involved. As is often the case when using secondary data for research, this data did not always suit our needs in relation to our target population and was not always reported on the same basis, for example by the same age brackets or disability types. However we have attempted to use the available data as best as possible to illustrate the transport needs for YPWD in the study area. Where we have made assumptions these have been explained in the text.

3.1 Persons with a disability in New South Wales

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has collected data on people with disabilities in surveys in 1998 and 2003. The most recent 2003 survey, the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) was conducted throughout Australia from June to November 2003. The survey defined a disability as any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. The data from this survey is available on the ABS website.

In 2003 the number of people with a disability in NSW was 1.2m which represented 18% of the population. Of these 733,000 (62%) were under 65 years of age and 456,000 (38%) were 65 years and over. For the total population as a whole, 13% of people under 65 years old had a disability and 53% of 65 year olds and over had a disability. This proportion varied greatly by age group as shown in Figure 1.

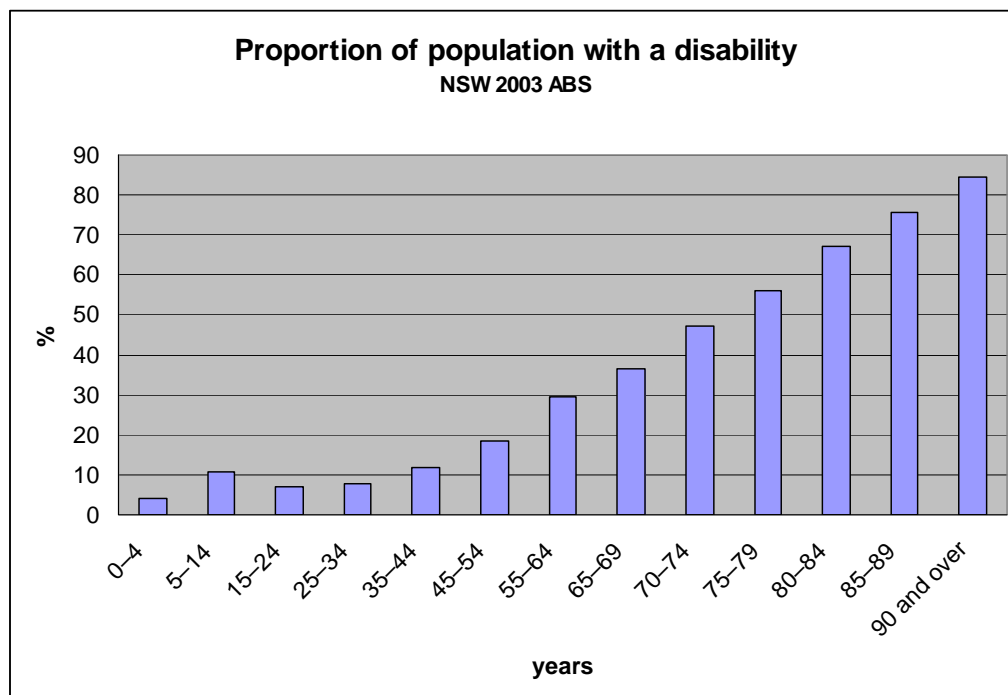


Figure 1. Proportion of population with a disability, NSW

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers*. (Cat. No. 4430.0)

Despite their disability many of these people are in the labour force and actively involved in the community. In NSW, for people aged 15-64 years who report “specific limitations or restrictions” 45% (231,000) are in the labour force, that is employed full or part time or looking for work. Of the other 55% (277,000) who are not in the labour force, some of these will be involved in either supported activities or other special programs. These figures indicate that over a quarter of a million young people with mobility difficulties require transport to work on most days in NSW and perhaps a similar number require transport to other activities at least on some days.

3.2 Transport Needs

The mode of transport used by people with a disability is predominantly the car. When asked about travel in the last fortnight, overall 74% of trips by people aged over 5 years with a disability were by motor vehicle either as driver (43%) or passenger (30%). Public transport was used for 10% of trips. These trips were mainly for going to work, school, shopping or other activities, less often for trips to medical appointments. A further 11% of trips were made by walking, while 4% reported that they did not make a trip in the last fortnight and 1% reported that they do not leave their home. (Data is for NSW in 2003.)

However, for the 1.1 million persons over 5 years of age in NSW with a disability the majority, around 85%, report that they can use some form of public transport, though sometimes some help is required. However 14% (150,000) report that they cannot use any form of public transport and, as noted, around 1% (8,000) of people over 5 years of age with a disability report that they do not leave their home.

3.3 Local Government Area Estimates of People with a Disability

More geographically detailed information on persons with a disability was accessed from the National Disability Administrator’s¹ website, to estimate the number of people with a disability in the 7 LGAs in the project area.

Table 1 shows the estimated population of people with a disability in the 7 LGAs for this study. On average, 15% of the population of the study area have a disability, which represents just over 120,000 people. The number of people in each LGA ranges from nearly 5,500 in Wollondilly to almost 30,000 in Fairfield.

Table 1. Estimated population with a disability by Local Government Area, 2003

Local Government Area	Population with disability	Total population	% Population with a disability
Bankstown	28,702	171,087	16.8%
Camden	6,150	48,536	12.7%
Campbelltown	20,559	148,115	13.9%
Fairfield	29,779	186,420	16.0%
Liverpool	22,305	162,602	13.7%
Wingecarribee	7,305	42,048	17.4%
Wollondilly	5,468	39,211	13.9%
Total	120,268	798,019	15.1%

Source: Small Area Estimates of Disability, National Disability Administrators website (www.nda.gov.au)

People with disabilities are classified by the type of restriction in core activities which is experienced. The core activities include self care, mobility and communication. Table 2 shows the number of people with a disability by type of restriction in the LGAs of the study area. Note that the numbers with each restriction type add to more than the total population with a disability as it is common for people to have more than one type of restriction. However, based on this data, it could be said that 43,439 people in the study area have a mobility restriction (and possibly another type of restriction) which represents 36% of people with a disability or 5% of the total population.

Table 2. Estimated population (No.) by area of restriction by Local Government Area, 2003

Local Government Area	Self Care	Mobility	Communication	Total Population
Bankstown	7,699	10,607	1,882	171,088
Camden	1,456	2,039	485	48,536
Campbelltown	4,888	6,961	1,629	148,115
Fairfield	8,762	11,745	2,423	186,423
Liverpool	5,691	7,805	1,789	162,602
Wingecarribee	1,724	2,439	420	42,048
Wollondilly	1,294	1,843	392	39,213
Total	31,514	43,439	9,021	798,025

Source: Small Area Estimates of Disability, National Disability Administrators website (www.nda.gov.au)

The data in Tables 1 and 2 is for the total population of all people with disabilities. The NDA data also includes estimates of the number of persons with a disability by age group for each LGA in NSW. It is therefore possible to determine the number of people with a disability under 65 years of age for the LGAs in this study. The total population of persons under 65 years with a disability for each LGA is summarised in Figure 2. Figure 3 shows the number of people under 65 years with a disability, by age group, in each LGA in the study area.

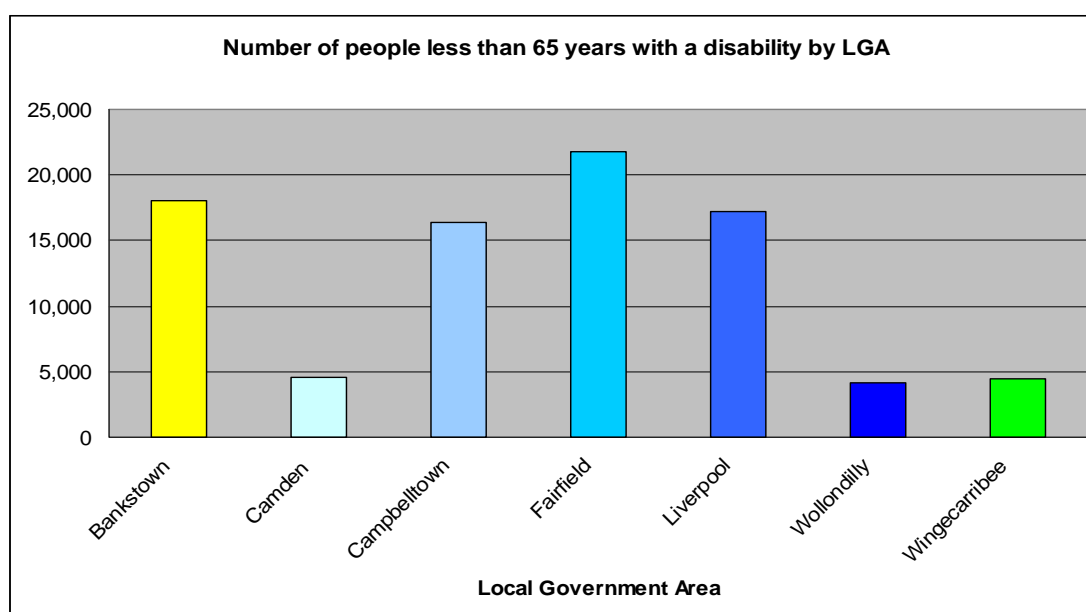
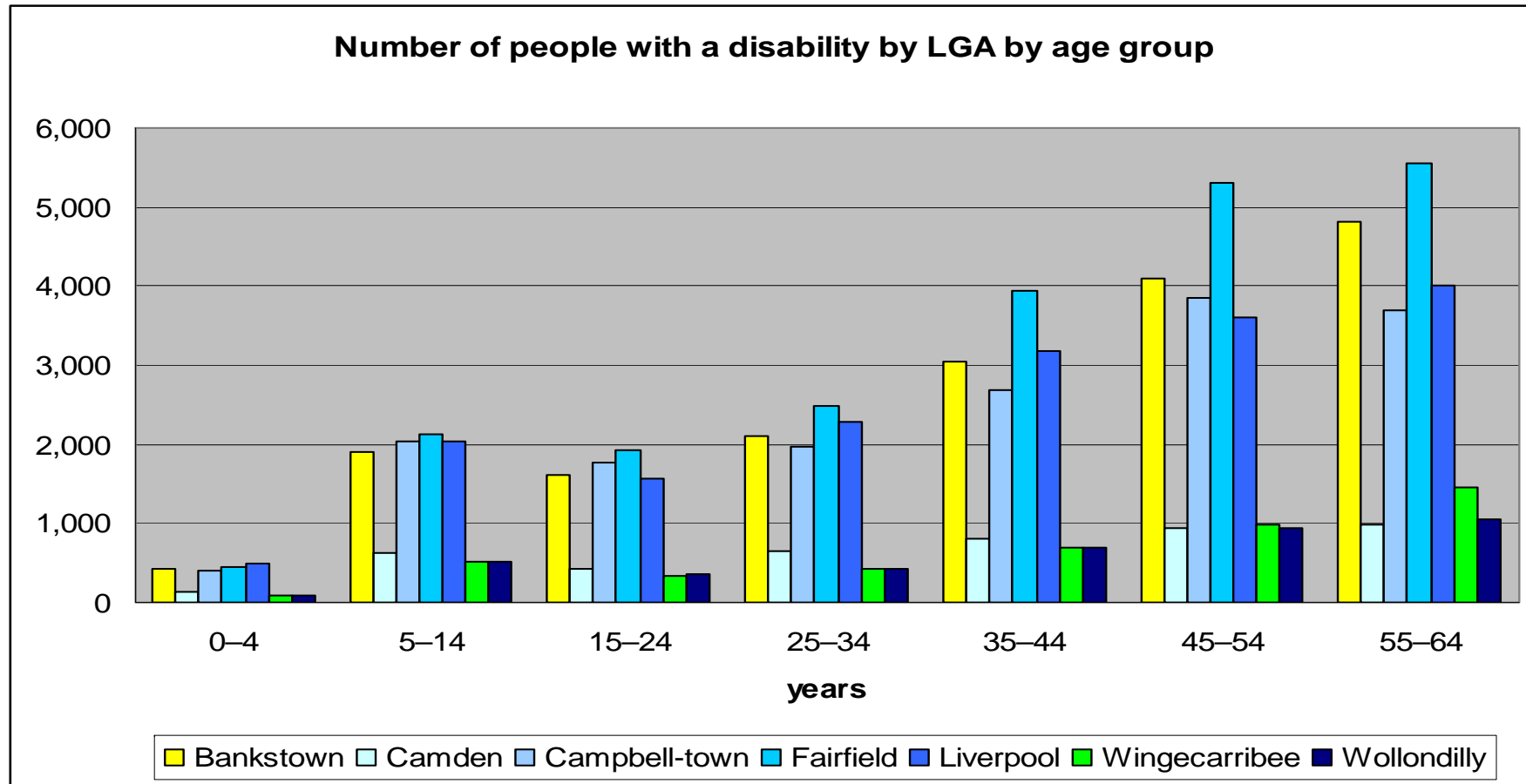


Figure 2. Number of people less than 65 years of age with a disability by LGA

Source: Small Area Estimates of Disability, National Disability Administrators website (www.nda.gov.au)

Figure 3.



Of the LGAs in this study, Fairfield has the highest number of people under 65 years with a disability (21,786) followed by Bankstown (18,013), Liverpool (17,207) and Campbelltown (16,394). The outer LGAs of Camden, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee have lower numbers of people with disabilities reflecting their smaller populations. However the proportion of the population with disabilities in these areas is similar to that in the other LGAs (see Table 1.).

3.4 Need for Support with Transport

There was no data available on the need for support with transport for our particular population group of young people (under 65 years) with a disability. The NDA data provides an estimate of the population 15 years and over with a disability who require support with transport. This data is shown for the LGAs in the study area in Table 3. It shows that in the study area almost 30,000 people of 15+ years of age with a disability require support with transport. The numbers range from just over 1,000 in Wollondilly to nearly 8,500 in Fairfield.

Table 3. Estimated population aged 15+ years with a disability requiring support with transport by Local Government Area, 2003

Local Government Area	No. 15+ years with a disability requiring support with transport	Total population 15+ years	% 15+ years of total population requiring support with transport
Bankstown	7,924	134,300	5.9%
Camden	1,291	35,865	3.6%
Campbelltown	4,232	111,359	3.8%
Fairfield	8,471	146,047	5.8%
Liverpool	5,008	122,145	4.1%
Wingecarribee	1,758	32,564	5.4%
Wollondilly	1,153	29,552	3.9%
Total	29,836	611,832	4.9%

Source: Small Area Estimates of Disability, National Disability Administrators website (www.nda.gov.au)

To attempt to more closely estimate the number of YPWD who require support with transport we used the estimated number of people over 15 years with a disability as a proportion of all people with a disability. We then applied this proportion to the population of people with a disability under 65 years of age in each LGA to derive the estimates shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Estimated population aged less than 65 years with a disability requiring support with transport by Local Government Area, 2003

Local Government Area	Total population under 65 years with a disability	No. under 65 years with a disability requiring support with transport	% Population under 65 years with a disability requiring support with transport
Bankstown	18,013	4,973	28%
Camden	4,590	964	21%
Campbelltown	16,394	3,374	21%
Fairfield	21,786	6,197	28%
Liverpool	17,207	3,863	22%
Wingecarribee	4,510	1,318	32%
Wollondilly	4,098	712	16%
Total	86,601	21,401	25%

Source: Derived from Small Area Estimates of Disability, National Disability Administrators website (www.nda.gov.au)

These estimates indicate that in the study area around 20,000 young people with disabilities require support with transport. According to the survey (ABS 2003) the “need for assistance and difficulty are defined for this activity (transport) as the need to be driven and difficulty going to places without help or supervision.”

3.5 The Future – Population Projections of People with Disabilities

To provide the Community Transport groups with an understanding of the numbers of people in the future with disabilities we have used the official NSW Government population projections for these areas from the Department of Planning (“NSW Population Projections 2001 to 2031 - Summary SLA”², prepared by the Transport Population Data Centre of the NSW Department of Planning, released 2005, version 1.2). Table 5 below shows the estimated numbers of people with a disability by age group for the 7 LGAs in this study for the years 2001 to 2031. Using the same population projections, and assuming that the same proportion of the population under 65 years in each LGA has a disability, the numbers of people with a disability for each of the 7 LGAs in the study area for the year 2031 is estimated as in Table 6. These estimates assume that the rates of disability in the general population will be the same as in 2003.

Table 5. Projected population with a disability by age group for the 7 South West Sydney LGAs for 2006 – 2031

Age years	Disability rate 2003*	Forecast number of persons with a disability						
		2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
0-4	3.5%	2,157	2,802	2,077	2,159	2,261	2,334	2,362
5-9	7.3%	4,681	4,512	4,517	4,581	4,719	4,901	5,021
10-14	8.3%	5,134	5,395	5,369	5,439	5,492	5,623	5,796
15-19	6.8%	4,152	4,317	4,579	4,613	4,658	4,674	4,747
20-24	6.9%	3,863	4,079	4,324	4,596	4,618	4,615	4,577
25-29	8.1%	4,905	4,580	4,973	5,340	5,577	5,596	5,558
30-34	9.2%	5,617	5,804	5,751	6,255	6,603	6,822	6,838
35-39	11.6%	7,307	7,317	7,781	7,859	8,412	8,790	9,019
40-44	12.8%	7,881	8,189	8,461	9,052	9,128	9,656	10,016
45-49	17.4%	9,442	10,700	11,309	11,815	12,557	12,607	13,237
50-54	19.9%	9,959	10,585	12,026	12,818	13,378	14,121	14,127
55-59	26.9%	9,773	12,878	13,796	15,668	16,689	17,402	18,277
60-64	34.9%	10,138	12,018	15,749	16,930	19,166	20,406	21,273
<65	12.0%	85,011	92,457	100,712	107,125	113,257	117,547	120,847
65-69	33.8%	7,949	9,115	10,893	14,205	15,236	17,240	18,342
70-75	42.6%	8,976	9,035	10,504	12,642	16,466	17,743	20,055
75-79	47.7%	7,873	8,594	8,842	10,404	12,648	16,505	17,909
80-84	57.9%	5,377	7,405	8,321	8,767	10,482	12,939	17,030
85+	66.8%	4,401	5,857	8,140	10,097	11,553	13,864	17,423
Total	15.1%	119,587	132,463	147,413	163,240	179,668	195,838	211,606

* From Small Area Estimates of Disability (see Table 3)

Table 6. Estimated population aged less than 65 years with a disability by Local Government Area, estimated for 2031

Local Government Area	Total population under 65 years with a disability 2003	Total population under 65 years with a disability 2031
Bankstown	18,013	20,109
Camden	4,590	14,647
Campbelltown	16,394	19,767
Fairfield	21,786	19,921
Liverpool	17,207	34,281
Wingecarribee	4,510	6,124
Wollondilly	4,098	5,998
Total	86,601	120,847

These estimates indicate that the number of people under 65 years with a disability in the study area could increase by nearly 40% between 2003 and 2031 to over 120,847 people. If 25% of these people required support with transport (see Table 5) this would represent around 30,000 people.

4 Consultations and survey findings

The data presented in Section 3 of this paper gives an indication of the size of the population of young people with disabilities in the study area that may be in need of assistance with transport. However to better understand the demand for transport and the transport requirements of this population in the study area, information for this project was collected by consultation with groups of young people with disabilities and/or their carers and with group co-ordinators and other workers providing services for people with disabilities.

4.1 Responses

In total 37 disability organisations and 6 schools provided input to the study in a variety of ways. Consultations were held with 16 groups, which included 2 schools. To complement the group discussions a group co-ordinator's survey and a survey of individual YPWD were also designed and circulated to groups and organisations. Co-ordinators from 11 groups completed the co-ordinators survey and 202 completed surveys were received from YPWD. As stated in the methodology section this was not designed as a representative sample survey, it was more of a qualitative information collection instrument. As the questionnaire was in some cases circulated by email by group co-ordinators, it was not possible to know the total number of questionnaires which was distributed, and hence calculate a response rate.

4.2 Main Findings

4.2.1 General background and transport needs

The findings from the discussions and the surveys confirmed that YPWD have transport needs which are indeed different from frail aged Home and Community Care Clients aged over 65 years. Unlike YPWD the older frail aged Home and Community Care clients are not in the workforce or attending living skills programs. From previous work we have undertaken in the Community Transport sector in Sydney on behalf of the Ministry of Transport, we found that 16% of client trips were to day care, 25% were for medical appointments/hospital visits, 23% for shopping and 24% for social outings, and the remaining 14% are for other purposes (Battellino et al, 2005). These trips are provided as regular group shopping and social trips and group and individual medical transport on weekdays during normal business hours.

As shown in Section 3 a significant proportion of young people with disabilities are in mainstream or supported employment. These young people seem to have more transport options either driving themselves or using public transport unassisted. YPWD who are not in the workforce can be involved in community programs providing social and recreation activities, living skills and workplace training and respite services. Access to these services is in many cases dependent on their access to transport.

Our consultations confirmed that YPWD still want to participate in the same sort of social and cultural activities as the rest of the community – they enjoy outings to movies, restaurants, clubs, bowling and other entertainment centres throughout the city. Some disability services provide very extensive programs of such activities. Access to these activities often depends on being able to get to a central point and then home again. As one father who is the carer of a 26 year old son with a disability said:

“Younger people with a disability are more accepted in the community now (which is good) but they need the access to transport to be able to get out.”

4.2.2 Activities

The “YPWD market” covers age ranges up to 65 years. Just as for the general population, their interests and preferences for outings depend on the particular age group as well as their individual preferences and abilities. Lack of transport for YPWD for social activities was often mentioned by community workers and young people. Sporting activities are important for YPWD and there is a range of programs available, such as those run by the NSW Wheelchair Sports Association and particular sports associations such as Macarthur Disabled Ten Pin Bowling Association.

As well as transport to activities for the young person, the carers and group co-ordinators often said that there is a need for transport to respite care. Often travelling to respite can take up to an hour and half each way (Bowral group participant) and often this has to be after 5pm on Friday evenings for weekend respite.

4.2.3 When transport is needed

The key times identified when transport services were most needed and difficult to find, are in the evening, at weekends and school holidays. Most disability services that were consulted provided activities either at nights and/or on weekends. These were either social and recreation outings for YPWD or respite services. Finding transport at these times was reported as difficult as public transport services are either not available, or less frequent, and these activities are out of the normal operating hours of Community Transport.

4.2.4 Transport options

Most YPWD rely very heavily on their carers, which are usually parents or siblings, for transport. Parents of school aged children accept that they have to drive their children to activities, however parents of older children (i.e. young to middle aged adults) find it increasingly difficult to drive their children everywhere for activities. This is because they themselves are getting older, and often have health or mobility problems so that driving, especially at night, is becoming increasingly more difficult.

Parents of younger school aged children with disabilities emphasised that their children could not travel unaccompanied in any mode, whether by public transport, taxi or Community Transport. They always need to be accompanied by a carer.

Even if a YPWD is able to use public transport, for example to go to work, that option may not be available to them for other activities in the evenings and at weekends. Lack of public transport services in South West Sydney at these times makes this difficult, as it does for

everyone in the community. However, unlike most people over 17 years, few YPWD are able to drive, which makes it even more difficult for them to get out and participate in social and recreational activities.

4.2.5 Using public transport

Using public transport was not an issue for some of the young people that we talked to. However others had had very unpleasant, even dangerous, experiences such as being attacked on the way from the train station (a Minto group participant), being abused or laughed at on the train (a Wingecarribee group participant) and being injured by train doors (an Ingleburn group participant).

Even if they had not experienced any particular unpleasant or dangerous incident, a lot of the young people that we spoke with were generally fearful of using public transport. In most cases this was either because they were concerned that they could not physically access the stations, stops or vehicles, or due to intellectual disabilities they were concerned about getting lost or coping if there were any unexpected problems on the system.

Some group participants commented that the accessibility of the trains had improved, however there was a lack of accessible stations. Accessibility of buses in Western Sydney was also mentioned as a continuing problem. Some of the disability services which provide Community Participation, ie Independent Living Skills and Transition to Work, programs also provide travel training on public transport. However long trips with interchanges (which are common in Western Sydney) are difficult for people who are not confident public transport users.

4.2.6 Taxis

Taxis are also an important mode of transport for YPWD. However, it was a commonly expressed opinion that even when they have access to the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS) vouchers which pay for half the taxi fare, it is still expensive to use taxis frequently and/or for long distance trips. For example long distance medical trips can cost over \$100 from South West Sydney to places such as Westmead, Prince of Wales Hospital and other city specialist medical centres. It is also expensive to use taxis on a regular basis for social outings for YPWD, as they generally have very low incomes. To minimise costs clients often travel to programs provided by the disability services by multi-hiring disabled taxis using TTSS vouchers. But these arrangements can often mean long pick up and drop off times.

The shortage of wheelchair taxis was frequently reported during consultations, and that taxis were often late and unreliable. Waiting for a taxi to turn up is frustrating for everyone, but even more difficult if you have a disability or are confined to a wheelchair. Pain, discomfort, the need for toilet facilities or getting something to drink can become major issues. It was often said that the best way to get any service was to have an arrangement with a regular driver.

4.2.7 Community Transport

There was generally a low level of knowledge or understanding of the services offered by Community Transport by YPWD and their carers. There was a strong perception that Community Transport only provides services for old people and it is predominantly available only on week days between 9am – 5pm. (This finding is consistent with research in the UK where a survey of the attitudes of disabled people to Community Transport in 2002 found that there is a lack of awareness and a lack of availability of Community Transport services for people with a disability, DPTAC 2004).

4.2.8 Transport and the disability services

Providing transport to activities is a constant problem for the disability services which are not funded for transport through HACC. While HACC provides funding for transport through the Community Transport services, this funding is not directly linked to HACC services provided in the community. This means that Community Transport doesn't always have the resources available to help with transport for the disability services. There is apparent underestimation of the need for Community Transport services and the long term cost of transport provision.

Some disability services purchase their own vehicles using funding from various sources, however that funding was often precarious, with no guarantee of ongoing funding or funding to cover maintenance or vehicle replacement. In some cases the service had to lease the vehicle to other services in order to get money to keep it. It would seem that there is a huge underestimation of how much Community Transport is needed (disability services co-ordinator, Bankstown).

4.2.9 Special needs

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community families with disabled children also have special problems. In some cases language is a barrier to finding out about services. For many members of the CALD community access to a car for the women and children is limited. The one car in the household is used by the father to go to work, even at weekends, leaving the mother with a number of children, including one with disabilities, isolated in the home. This is especially a problem in school holidays and at weekends. As a result that child is not able to attend weekend or holiday respite activities compromising the quality of life of not only that child, but also of the mother and the other siblings.

Consultations with the Aboriginal Disability Network (ADN) NSW indicated that the issues, including transport, for Aboriginal people with disabilities are largely hidden and little is known about them. The papers from the Aboriginal Disability Network Conference in 2002 stated that there is a "serious lack of knowledge on the part of government in relation to the prevalence of disability in Aboriginal communities". Their needs are met by their families and they mostly do not go outside their own communities. There is no statistical data on the prevalence of disability in the Aboriginal communities. "The Aboriginal health and welfare services tell us that their workers gather most of their information on Aboriginal disabilities by word of mouth when visiting Aboriginal households. It was found that many Aborigines with disabilities did not recognise that they have a disability. The Aboriginal health is in such a poor state that having a physical or intellectual impairment is not much different from the many other health concerns that they already have. The state of the Aboriginal community is such that they are so poverty ridden that having a disability is minor compared to the need for survival." (Bostock, 2004). Consultations by the ADN in 2004 identified that a key issue is lack of accessible transport options particularly for people living in regional and remote communities (AND, 2004). There is a large Aboriginal community in South West Sydney, and while it is not a remote region, the transport options for Aboriginal communities are limited.

5 Gaps in existing transport services

The transport difficulties of YPWD in South West Sydney are exacerbated by the lack of public transport services and the lack of accessibility of existing services for people with mobility problems or other disabilities. The main gaps in services were reported at nights and on weekends, just the times that YPWD (and other young people) want to go out. This was for buses, trains and regular taxis.

There is a lack of accessible public transport services. Only some stations in these areas have been upgraded as accessible stations, ie those having wheelchair access on a continuous path from the street to platforms to boarding the train. But these are only a minority of stations. Two out of 17 stations in the Bankstown LGA are accessible, 2 out of 7 stations for Campbelltown LGA, 2 out of 6 stations for Fairfield LGA and 1 out of 4 stations

for the Liverpool LGA. There are no accessible stations in Wingecarribee and Wollondilly (there are no rail stations in Camden). People with disabilities often have to travel to stations other their local station to be able to access the train.

The issue of wheelchair accessible buses was raised in nearly all our consultations. While most bus companies are acquiring new wheelchair accessible buses, they are still not always scheduled on the same services, and therefore not shown in the timetable. Not knowing if a wheelchair accessible bus is on a route makes it impossible for people using wheelchairs, or who have other mobility problems, to plan a trip. This uncertainty can discourage them completely from using public transport. It is expected that this uncertainty will be removed from the beginning of 2008 when the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Accessible Transport (2002) require that 25% of services have to be accessible and listed in the timetable.

Finally, there is still a shortage of wheelchair accessible taxis, with long waits and unreliable service commonly reported.

6 Conclusions

This study found that there is a lack of transport services catering to the needs of YPWD in South West Sydney. To provide services to meet the needs of the “YPWD market” it needs to be recognised that YPWD have transport needs which differ from the frail aged HACC target group. Furthermore, within the under 65 year age bracket there are many varied needs within this broad population group, depending on age, interests and level of disability.

Mostly personal individual transport needs of YPWD are met by their carers – usually the parents. However, in some cases such as low income households and Aboriginal and CALD communities where access to a private car is limited, assistance with transport is needed, especially for medical trips. Also, as the parents of YPWD get older, they find it harder to provide that transport. There is also a demand for group social and recreation trips for young adults with disabilities, especially in the evenings and on weekends. Young adults with disabilities want to participate in the same type of social and recreational activities as people without disabilities. Many YPWD have difficulty using mainstream public transport services. Their problems are often exacerbated by poor accessibility of the system and vehicles, and in some cases, by the attitudes of drivers and other passengers.

Community Transport’s resources are limited and they have focussed primarily on servicing the aged market, with regular shopping and social trips and medical trips during the week. However, feedback from the Community Transport providers, as well as from people over 65 which we spoke to during this study and in our previous work, indicates that there are many aged clients who also miss out on services as demand exceeds the resources available.

To provide service for the YPWD market the Community Transport groups need to overcome the perception that Community Transport is only for “old people” and is hard to organise (for the client). A marketing effort targeting trips for younger people is needed. This may involve new brochures and even younger volunteers and bus assistants. A number of the disability organisations have mentioned specific opportunities for providing transport for their activities which may be a good starting point for developing relationships with them and the YPWD community.

To be able to meet these service needs the Community Transport groups may need to develop new service delivery strategies such as evening and weekend services and to find additional sources of funding and resources. Some options for doing this could be through taxi voucher schemes, developing partnerships with the mainstream bus operators and

working directly with the disability services to obtain funding for transport related to specific new service activities.

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Notes

1. The National Disability Administrators (NDA) is the key national representative body for government agencies in the Commonwealth, States and Territories responsible for the delivery of specialist disability support services to people with disabilities. The NDA is responsible for the management and implementation of the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement 2002 - 2007 (CSTDA). The CSTDA is the five year agreement between the Australian and State/Territory Governments that sets the national framework for the delivery, funding and development of specialist disability services in Australia for people with severe or profound disabilities.

Data at a Local Government Area (LGA) level for all NSW on people with a disability has been produced for the NDA by the ABS based on data collected from the 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, and the 2001 Census. Care should be taken in using the data at this level and the

following caution is given by the ABS. "The small area estimates are a tool. Used in conjunction with an understanding of local area characteristics and their quality limitations, they should assist in making sensible decisions on issues involving the regional distribution of disability."

2. The projections are based on an assessment of demographic trends and settlement patterns, reflecting changes in social policy, social behaviour and economics. The main purpose of the projections is to inform government strategic and service level planning and policy development. Disaggregation of the projections by age was undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The projections are estimates of resident population. We have used the "medium level" scenario.