

Overcoming barriers to implementing flexible transport services in NSW

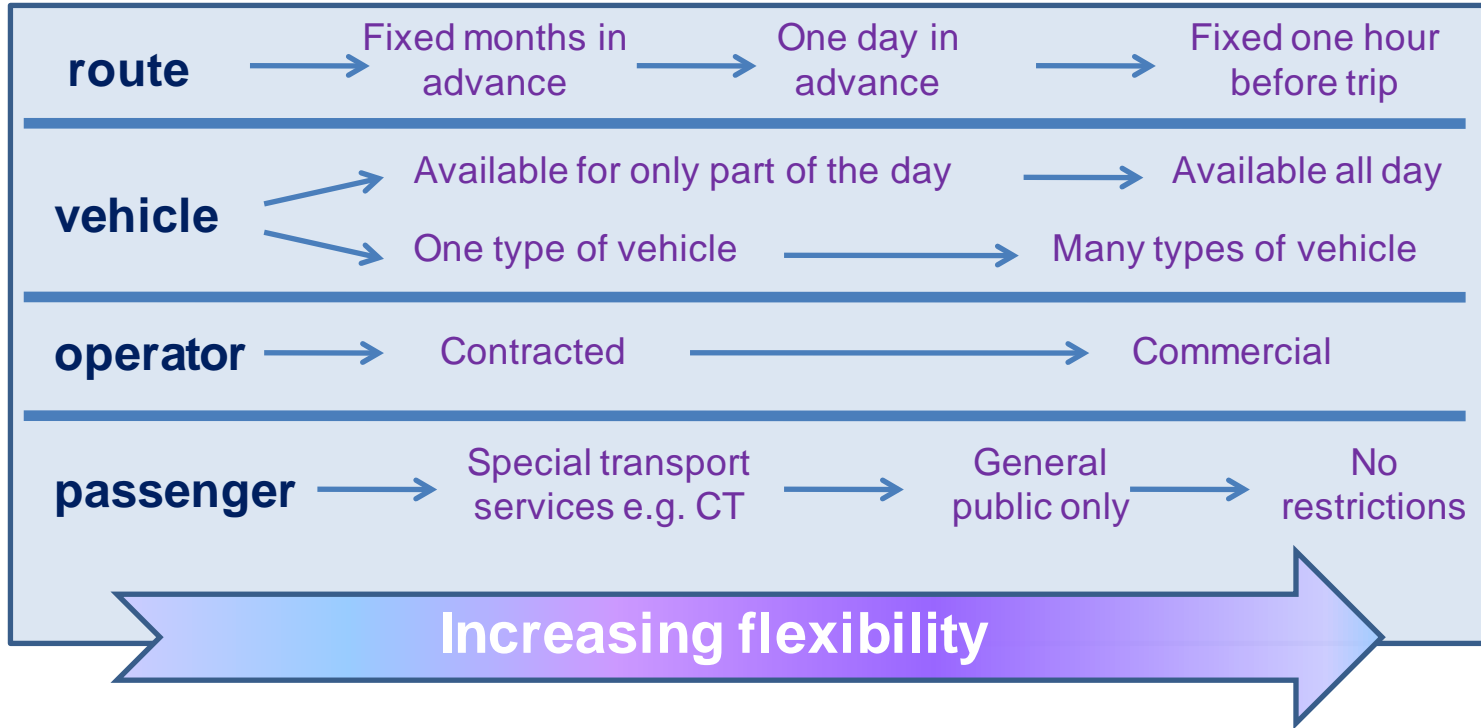
Presentation to NCOSS, Transport Policy Advice Group
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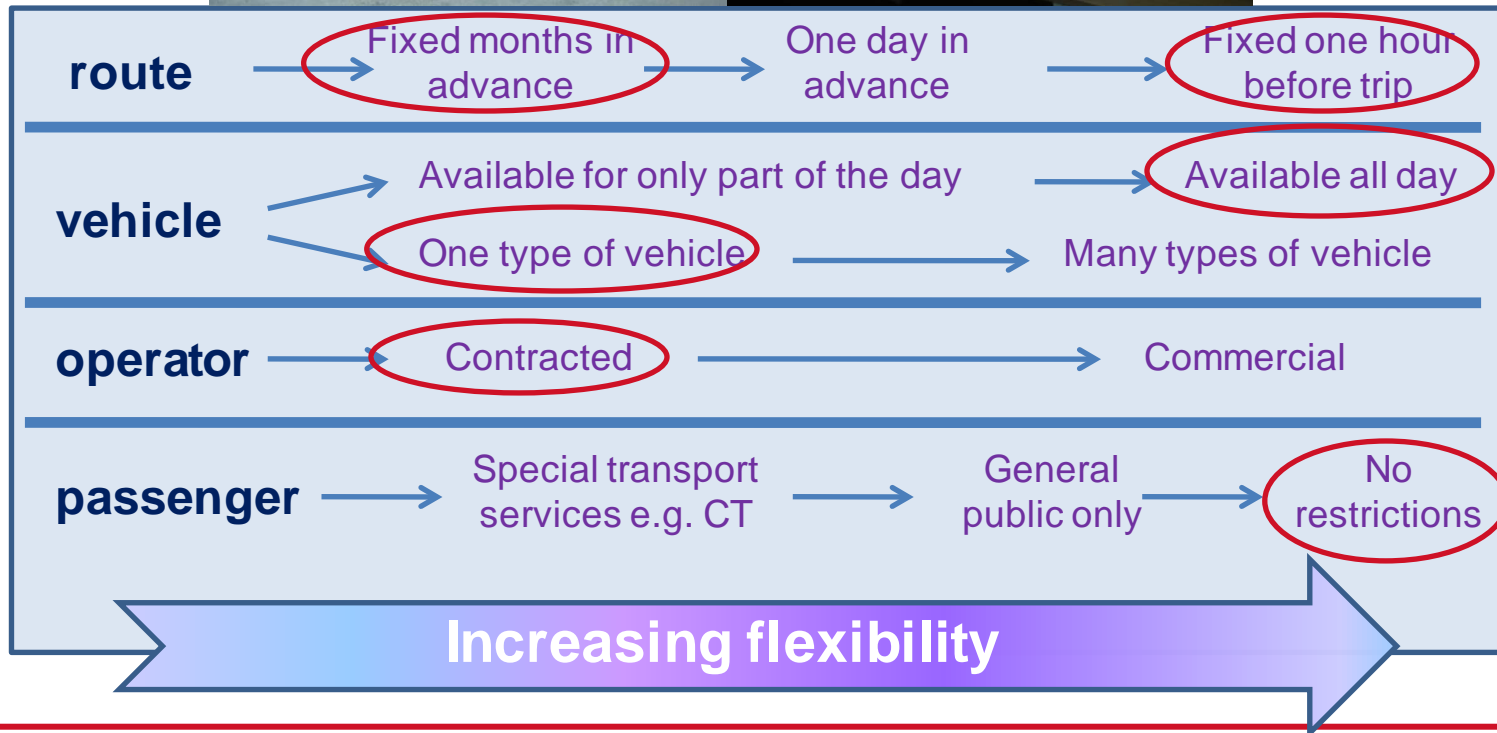


- › Background to flexible transport services
- › Motivation, aims and methodology of research
- › Barriers and solutions to implementing FTS
- › The opportunities offered by FTS
- › Conclusions
- › Next steps – research and how you can help

What are flexible transport services?

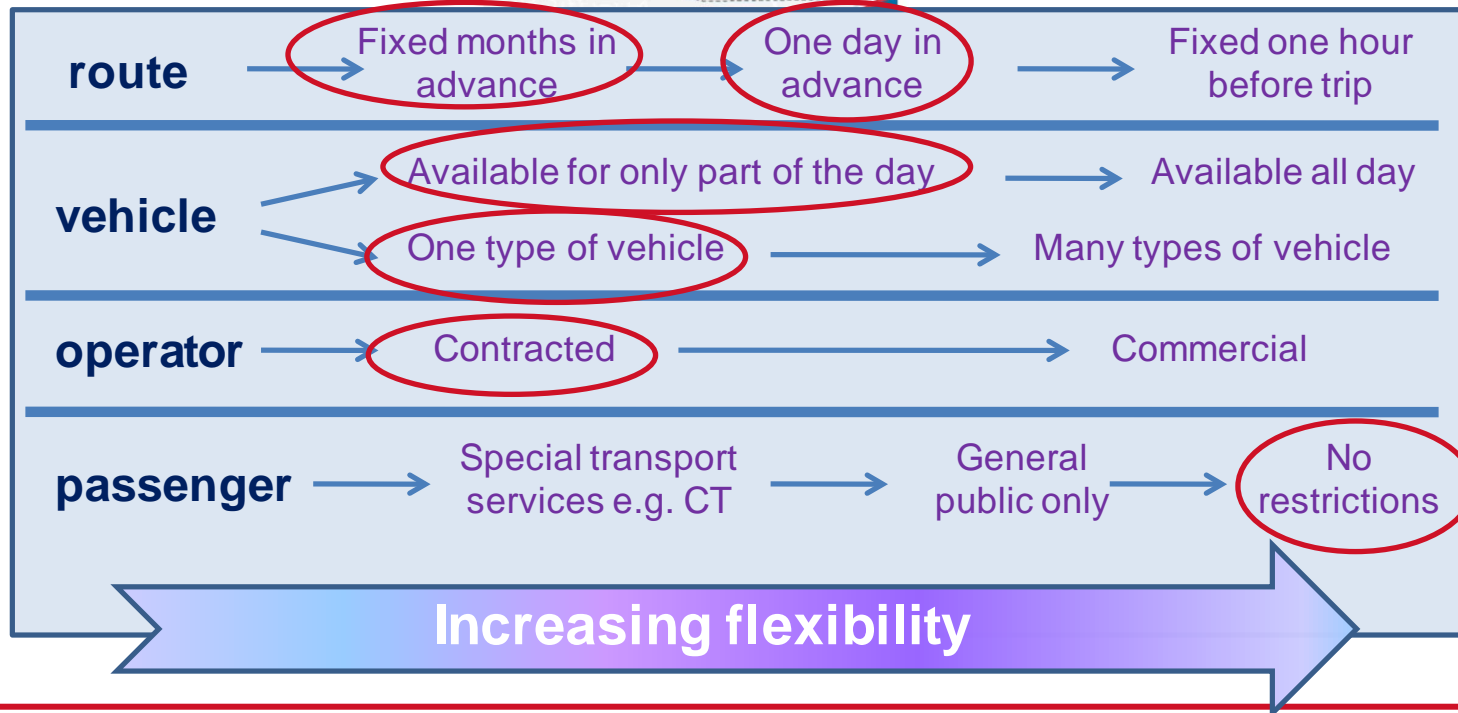
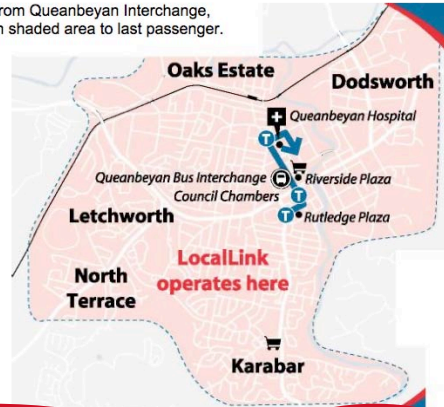


“services provided for passengers (and freight) that are flexible in terms of route, vehicle allocation, vehicle operator, type of payment and/or passenger category”



LocalLink, Queanbeyan

On departure from Queanbeyan Interchange, bus operates in shaded area to last passenger.



Motivation, aims and methodology for research

› Motivation

- Flexible Transport Services are increasingly common in Europe/US
- Why are there so few in Australia?

› Aims

- To identify barriers to greater use of flexible transport services
- To identify ways to overcome barriers

› Method: semi-structured interviews with stakeholders including

- Regulator and planner: Transport NSW
- Transport operators: bus, taxi, community transport
- Peak bodies: operators, users, NCOSS

Innovative approaches to public transport in NSW

› Flexible transport services

- LocalLink Queanbeyan, LocalLink South Coast, Maitland On-call bus, Towamba Valley Access Bus
- Willoughby Council Cab shared pre-booked taxis
- TigerRider, Leichhardt

› Innovations

- Taxi eg Liquor Accord taxi, Maitland
- Community Transport eg CT hiring taxis

› Other

- Bus operators buying taxi operators



Five themes

1. Policy, legislation and regulation
2. Economic – Funding and fares
3. Operational – Vehicle and fleet issues
4. Attitudes, perceptions, culture and relationships
5. Information and education

Also relationships between barriers

1. Policy, legislation and regulation

| Barrier | Solution |
|--|--|
| 1. Legislation is very mode specific | Ensure legislation is outcome focussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regulate operator separately from the vehicle • explicitly recognise flexible services • maintain safety regulation |
| 2. Community Transport 'outside' framework | Include CT within legislation if operating passenger transport services |
| 3. Contracts give <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little freedom or flexibility • No incentive for innovation | Allow contracts to provide flexible services without artificial constraints eg bus stops, timetable Alter balance of 'proof' to allow services without subsidy |
| 4. Service planning guidelines accept flexibility but give no guidelines | Need to recognise flexible service and role they can play |

2. Economic issues – funding and fares

| Barrier | Solution |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Overall level of funding | <p>Increase overall funding?</p> <p>Recognise flexible services take time to build patronage</p> <p>Flexible services more expensive than well loaded mass transit but cheaper than empty buses</p> |
| 2. Bus services | <p>Target incentives to motivate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looking for alternative delivery mechanisms • exploitation of economies of scale |
| 3. Taxi services | <p>Multiple hiring fares become closer to public transport fares</p> <p>Taxi-size vehicles operating as bus should charge separate, public transport fares</p> |
| 4. Community Transport | <p>If part of public transport mix, should charge public transport fares</p> |
| 5. Fares issues | <p>Make fare reflect service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charge premium if deviate from route • smart ticketing will facilitate |

3. Operational issues – fleet and vehicle issues

| Barrier | Solutions |
|--|---|
| 1. No shortage of vehicles but mix favours conventional services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure funding achieves appropriate fleet mix |
| 2. Vehicle type determined by peak demand and government funding | |
| 3. Spare capacity in all sectors – bus, taxis and CT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write brokerage into contracts• Encourage greater transferability of drivers across modes• Provide information to increase awareness of brokerage |
| 4. Brokerage attempted but not successful | |

4. Attitudes, perceptions and culture

| Barriers | Solutions |
|--|---|
| 1. Mistrust between operators and govt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve certainty and expectations • Provide information about role of flexible transport |
| 2. Mistrust between operators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on peak body relationships and Regional Co-ordinator activities • Build skills of partnership governance between multiple stakeholders |
| 3. Ambiguous role of local government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify role in relation to funding • Involve in stakeholder partnership |
| 4. Community expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate on sharing services • Ensure 131500 includes flexible services • Provide marketing and education budget in new services |
| 5. Lack of awareness | |

5. Information and education

| Barriers | Solutions |
|---|--|
| 1. Unsure how flexible services can help | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compile data on opportunities offered |
| 2. Operators comfortable with core business | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing evidence on effectiveness of flexible services• Demonstrate how flexible services can contribute to core business |
| 3. Education of passengers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible transport is not a taxi service – related to sharing culture and pre-conceptions on vehicles etc |

Are flexible transport services worth pursuing?

Opportunities for new service types

- › To provide gap filling for access in conjunction with building frequency on major corridors
- › To provide feeder services from peninsulas/isolated valleys to major public transport corridors
- › To replace low frequency services at the urban fringe
- › To establish public transport in new growth or developing areas



Source: <http://cfit.independent.gov.uk/pubs/2008/rpt/technical/pdf/rpt-technical-ac-f.pdf>

Are flexible transport services worth pursuing?

Enhancing existing services

- › To provide service in rural/regional areas where conventional services are low frequency/ non-existent
- › To provide services at times of the day or week when conventional services are not viable (such as late at night, Friday and Saturday nights, weekends)
- › To encourage able community transport clients to use public transport



Source (both pictures): <http://cfit.independent.gov.uk/pubs/2008/rpt/technical/pdf/rpt-technical-ac-g.pdf>

- › The observation that few flexible services exist in Australia and in NSW in particular is explained by the presence of significant barriers
- › Barriers can be categorised into five main areas with inter-relationships between them
 - Barriers are not restricted to government actions
 - Significant barriers exist for operators and passengers
 - ‘Softer’ barriers of attitudes, culture etc are likely to be more difficult to overcome
- › Long term changes include legislative amendments but there are significant improvements that could come from shorter term changes which would not be expensive to implement

It's all about accessibility!

- › Several related projects underway
- › Flexible transport services
 - Developing business case for trial of flexible transport services
 - Demonstrating need for flexible transport services
- › Elements of accessibility gap
 - Spatial, temporal, economic, physical accessibility, information, attitudes
 - Understanding walking distances to bus stops
- › Accessibility planning
 - What are community standards for accessibility?
 - Focus groups with stakeholders and community survey
- › Value of accessibility
 - Impact of Liverpool-Parramatta Tway on accessibility and property values
- › Student research projects