

JOINT STATEMENT ON NEW CO-OPERATIVE

This is a joint statement released by GREAT Community Transport (GCT) Bankstown Canterbury Community Transport (BCCT) and Community Wheels (CWCT).

Purpose

This joint statement has been prepared in response to interest received from a number of organisations about the progress we have made in forming a new Co-operative.

Background

GCT, BCCT and CWCT are working with the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) and EY to prepare a strategic plan and business case to enable us to establish a new Member-owned Co-operative.

The project commenced in February 2015 and we expect it to be completed by the end of October 2015.

The project is being run as a co-production involving the 3 community transport organisations (CTO's) working with the BCCM and EY team to help us chart a new course for how we operate in the future. This co-production involves representatives from each of the 3 CTO's including Boards, executive management, some advisers, staff and volunteers. We have established strong project governance to help keep us on track with what we have set out to achieve. A series of 6 co-production workshops, commenced on 4 February 2015.

The BCCM team includes high-level expertise and experience by consulting with BCCM CEO, Melina Morrison and Project Director, Gillian McFee. Specialist advisers are also central to the project in Les Hems and his team from EY and Robyn Donnelly, a specialist in the National Co-operative Law. Alexandra Hordern from the BCCM is providing project management and administrative support. Transport for NSW is also supporting the project.

Why are we doing this?

Our operating environment has changed and we expect more change ahead. In particular, changing community expectations and new consumer directed funding in aged care and the NDIS mean we have had to seriously consider what we need to do in order to remain relevant for the communities in which we operate.

We became aware of the White Paper released last year by the BCCM on Public Service Mutuals: a Third Way. This paper highlights the benefits of co-operative and mutual models in creating shared value in communities.

We have reflected on past approaches to collaborations either by merger, amalgamation or cooperation. The boards of our 3 CTO's have now identified that forming a Co-operative is a positive and culturally aligned approach to evolving our organisations. The Co-operative model has potential to help us respond proactively to the changes ahead, whilst enabling us to remain relevant in delivering services to our local communities.

Our solution

BCCT, CWCT and GCT have come together with a shared purpose and compatible values to form a working party to investigate feasibility, methodology and costs of collaboration to establish a new Co-operative. The Co-operative will be established under the Co-operative National Law which following consideration by COAG, is rolling out building on the NSW legislation.

This working party has oversight of our transition to an independent governance body to ensure that the articles of cooperation and any funding contracts are managed appropriately within the funding guidelines.

The major outcomes of the collaboration process are expected to be:

- Realise better efficiencies by avoiding duplication and achieving a more productive use of our assets
- Improve fleet and driver utilisation to increase service delivery at optimal costs
- Enable growth of knowledge, development of capability and adoption of innovation
- Provide employees and volunteers with training opportunities and career paths whilst ensuring a safe quality service
- Utilise current service structures and geographical influence to deliver timely services across the Sydney Metropolitan and Blue Mountains Areas
- Allow each member organisation to remain linked with its local community
- Provide effective leadership to support cultural change in the three services

Moving to a cooperative model will ensure that the objectives of all stakeholders can be met including customer satisfaction, efficiencies in movement of customers by an aligned approach, continuity of service delivery, preservation of local identity and, cost savings for fleet services and administrative functionality. Also, efficiencies in the economies of scale should be highlighted through strong procurement procedures and staff reduction or relocation in corporate services areas.

What has been achieved so far?

We are part way through the project however the following progress has been made:

- A project governance charter has been developed and agreed
- A stakeholder engagement and communication plan has been developed
- Five of 6 co-production workshops have been held
- A draft Constitution and operating guidelines for the new Co-operative have been agreed and considered by the NSW Co-operatives Registrar
- We have agreed what functions will be performed by the new Co-operative and the 3 Member CTO's
- A draft 3-year strategic plan has been considered

Next steps

We expect that our application to the NSW Co-operatives Registrar will be to initially form the new Co-operative with the 3 CTO's – GCT, BCCT and CWCT.

However the National Co-operatives Law requires a minimum of 5 Members. Growing the active Membership of the Co-operative is therefore a priority for us. We know that to achieve the efficiency and effectiveness gains required, the Co-operative will need more Members so it can be more capable and better resourced to help its founding Members as well as other new Members.

We have more work to do in developing a prospectus and guidelines for attracting and selecting new Members.

However, we are interested to hear from individuals, other CTO's a/or community-based organisations operating in the Commonwealth Home Support Program or NDIS who are interested in learning more about what we are doing and may want to register an interest in future membership.

Further details: Register your interest on the BCCM website <http://www.bccm.coop>

Contact: In the first instance for more information contact Project Sponsor, Denis Hayward, Chair BCCT on Ph.: **(02) 9772 4928**