CIRCULAR HEAD COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 22 September

Council advocacy helps drive better transport access for Circular Head

Circular Head Council has welcomed new funding that will increase community transport services for eligible residents, with the announcement highlighting the importance of community feedback, collaboration and ongoing advocacy around transport access.

The Tasmanian Government has announced Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST) will receive $305,000 a year for three years to increase its capacity across the North West and West Coast.

The $915,000 investment will support three additional vehicles, employ drivers and provide around 12,000 additional subsidised trips for eligible residents needing to travel for healthcare.

For Circular Head Council, the announcement follows months of work to put local transport challenges firmly on the agenda.

Earlier this year, Council conducted a community survey after repeatedly hearing that a lack of suitable transport was making it difficult for people to access work, education, healthcare, shopping and other essential services.

The survey data provided Council with current local evidence to strengthen its advocacy with the Tasmanian Government and other service providers.

Circular Head Mayor Gerard Blizzard said today's announcement was an example of Council listening to its community and using its advocacy role to pursue better outcomes.

“Our community has been telling us that transport is a real barrier for people in Circular Head.

“Our Vision 2050 is about building a healthy, connected community where people can access the services they need, and it also recognises Council's important leadership role in advocating for our community.

“This announcement is a practical step towards that vision. It won't solve every transport challenge we face, but for people who will now have better access to healthcare because of these additional services, it can make a very real difference to their lives.”

Council has continued to raise transport access in discussions with State Government representatives, including through meetings with Ministers, while using the survey findings to demonstrate the experiences and needs of Circular Head residents.

General Manager Paul Gardner said Council had deliberately used its role and relationships to keep the issue on the agenda.

“Council doesn't deliver public transport, but we can make sure the experiences of our community are heard by the people and organisations that can make a difference.

“We have kept chipping away at this – gathering local evidence, raising the issue with Ministers and service providers and looking for opportunities to turn what our community told us into practical outcomes.

“We know this service won't meet every transport need in Circular Head and our advocacy doesn't stop here. We will keep looking for practical and creative opportunities, working with government, service providers and our community to improve access and reduce the disadvantage that distance and limited transport options can create.”

Importantly, Council's work also helped bring Circular Head's transport needs to the attention of CTST.

CTST Chief Executive Officer Lyndon Stevenson said Council's survey and the subsequent public discussion prompted the organisation to look more closely at opportunities in Circular Head.

“We became aware of Circular Head Council's public transport survey through the media and shared the findings across our organisation. It highlighted a clear need in the community and prompted us to look at what more CTST could do in Circular Head. Today’s announcement means our capacity has increased in the region and will help meet some of the transport needs identified in Circular Head without reducing services elsewhere.” Mr Stevenson said.

“Earlier this year we told our community that their feedback would help us build the case for better transport. Yesterday's announcement shows why that participation matters. When our community tells us what is happening, it gives Council stronger evidence to take into the rooms where these issues are being discussed.” Mr Gardner said.

Council will continue advocating for broader transport solutions for Circular Head and encourages residents to continue sharing their experiences and ideas.

Authorised for general media distribution by Gerard Blizzard, Mayor, Circular Head Council.

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