

TWEED, BYRON & BALLINA

**COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**



# **Client Information Handbook**

**Call 1300 875 895**

**\*\*\*Large Print \*\*\***

# **Acknowledgment of Country**

Tweed Byron and Ballina Community Transport acknowledges the people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional custodians of the land we live and work on and pays respect to Elders past and present.

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## **About Us**

Tweed Byron and Ballina Community Transport (TBBCT) is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation. We provide a range of transport services for people who cannot access conventional public or private transport.

TBBCT strives to provide an inclusive and accessible service. We welcome clients regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, faith or disability. We aim to provide a culturally appropriate service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We provide the following door-to-door transport services:

- individual transport
- shopping and social buses
- taxi vouchers

We are an NDIS registered provider and do brokerage for organisations that require transport for their clients.

## **Our Clients**

We provide services to support people who are transport disadvantaged and cannot access mainstream transport options.

## **Funding**

We receive funding through Transport for NSW and the Australian Government Department of Health.

## **Staff and Volunteers**

Our services are provided by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Volunteers are an integral part of our busy organisation and we would not be able to provide our service without them.

Our people are trained to respect your rights, including your rights to dignity, independence and confidentiality.

Our team of mostly volunteer drivers and attendants are known to be kind, considerate, friendly, safe and thoughtful. **We value them highly, so please treat them with the respect they deserve.**

# **Our Services**

## **Individual Transport**

We provide transport to medical appointments, locally, within the region and north to South East Queensland. You can book transport for a variety of appointments, for example a local GP or allied health service (such as community health, podiatrist or optometrist), or for a specialist appointment or hospital admission. Transport will be provided in either a community transport or volunteer driver's own vehicle.

There will be occasions when you are asked to share transport with others who are travelling to or from a similar destination at a similar time. This may result in additional waiting, or you may need to leave home earlier than otherwise. In these situations, we always prioritise getting people to their appointment on time. So, although we make every effort to get you home in a timely manner, please understand that sometimes we do not have the resources to get you home immediately when you are ready. Ride sharing helps us manage costs, especially if you are travelling to the Gold Coast or Brisbane.

You can also book individual transport for other social needs or personal business, such as to get the hairdresser, solicitor, meetings, nursing home and hospital visits. We can even help you get your pet to the vet.

## **How to Make a Booking**

We require **at least three business days notice** to enable us to coordinate your transport. Our offices are open to take bookings between 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Please have the following information handy when you call to make the booking:

- Date of your trip
- Exact name and address of your destination
- Approximate time you will be ready to return
- If anyone will be travelling with you
- If you need to travel to additional places eg pharmacy

You will receive an automated phone call letting you know the approximate pick up time on the afternoon before your trip. You will be given the option to confirm or cancel your trip. Even if you don't respond to this message your trip will go ahead as planned.

## **On the Day of Travel**

The weather in our area can sometimes be very hot or wet. Because our service is door to door, if you are concerned about your comfort or safety, you can wait inside and our driver will come to the door to collect you. Please ensure you are ready on time, as our drivers may have busy schedules on the day.

Due to traffic or weather conditions, we may occasionally be a little late, or early, for a pick up. Unfortunately, this is sometimes unavoidable. If your driver is more than 5 to 10 minutes late, please call the office so we can look into it for you.

If your appointment is going to take significantly longer than expected, please ask the receptionist to call our office. Then we can alert the volunteer driver, who may be waiting for you.



## **Cancellations and Changes to your Appointment**

Sometimes things change, such as you may not be able to make your appointment, or it may have been rescheduled. If this has happened, **please contact us as soon as possible**. It may mean your scheduled driver can assist someone else, or it may save them from making an unnecessary trip. We have an answering machine, which is checked early each morning and throughout the day, so please leave us a message if no one is available to take your call.

## **Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA)**

DVA clients who have a Gold Card can use our medical transport service for no charge, as the Department of Veterans Affairs will cover the cost. For each trip, your driver will give you a form to sign and they will return it to our office for processing.

## **Shopping Bus Service**

We offer regular weekly or fortnightly bus trips to a shopping centre near you. We collect you from your home, take you out and return you safely to your door.

An attendant is available to support you on and off the bus, load your shopping and take it into your home if you wish. Pick up is anywhere between 8.00am and 9.30am, depending on the service. You have about 2 hours at your destination, leaving around lunchtime. Details, including the cost, will be discussed with you when you register for this service.

A schedule is available on our website [www.community-transport.org.au](http://www.community-transport.org.au) or by calling the office on **1300 875 895** extension 4.

## **Social Bus Service**

TBBCT provides monthly social outings. This is a terrific way to get out of the house, make new friends and see some of our beautiful countryside. Our clients really enjoy this service.

Passengers are picked up at home and go out for the day, stopping at interesting places and enjoying a pleasant morning tea and lunch. An attendant is on board to assist you and make sure everyone is safe, comfortable and having an enjoyable time.

A schedule is available on our website [www.community-transport.org.au](http://www.community-transport.org.au) or from the office by calling **1300 875 895**.

## **Registration, Bookings and Cancellations for Social and Shopping Buses**

Our social outings are very popular so make sure you register and book in advance!

Contact the bus administrator on **1300 875 895**, extension 4, to register for the service. They will discuss the details, including costs, with you.

Once you have registered you will have direct contact with the attendant and can advise them of any changes to your plans. You can also cancel after hours by leaving a message on our answering machine. Office staff will ensure your driver gets the message.

## **Taxi Vouchers**

Taxi vouchers are available for our older clients to assist you to maintain your independence. To find out if you are eligible, please call your service administrator on **1300 875 895**.

Vouchers can be used when regular community transport services are not appropriate, particularly if you require transport outside of our regular hours or at short notice.

Examples of taxi voucher use are as follows:

- appointments
- visiting friends and loved ones
- support and social groups
- clubs and sporting events

## **Access and Inclusion**

We pride ourselves on providing a high quality, accessible, culturally safe and affordable service to all our clients.

In recognition that many people in **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** communities experience difficulties in relation to transport, we employ an Aboriginal Transport Development Officer to assist with access to our services and to work with the community to try and resolve transport disadvantage issues.

If you have a **disability**, we record the details of your needs so we can assist you with sensitivity, from booking your trips, through to the journey itself. If your needs change over time, please advise the office so we can ensure we can continue to provide you with appropriate care.

If you have a **hearing or speech impairment**, you can contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS). Find out how to do this on our **Contact Us** page.

If you have a **mobility impairment**, we have a range of vehicles to meet your needs, from cars and buses which are easy to get in and out of (with respectful assistance where appropriate), to wheelchair accessible vehicles. If you use our shopping bus service, we can even assist you with carrying bags to your front door.

**Vision impaired** clients with assistance dogs will find them very welcome in all our vehicles. Also, our resource materials are available in large print or electronic form. They can be downloaded from [www.community-transport.org.au](http://www.community-transport.org.au) or requested from the office by calling **1300 875 895**.

## **Costs**

Fees for individual transport vary, depending on the distance travelled.

A list of fees is provided to all new clients and you can call the office and request a copy. A fee is also payable for our bus trips.

**Carers travel on all our services free of charge.**

We are a not-for-profit organisation and aim to keep our services affordable to everyone. We receive government funding to provide transport services for eligible clients and this money helps subsidise the actual cost of your trip.



## **Payments**

Payments for individual transport can be made by cash or cheque made payable to Tweed Byron and Ballina Community Transport. Payments are made to your driver, in an envelope which they will hand to you on the day of travel. Please ensure your name and date of travel is clearly written on the envelope and seal it before returning it to the driver. Our drivers do not carry change, so please have the correct amount available. If you would like a receipt, make a note of this on the envelope.

For bus travel, please pay the attendant when you get on board.

# **Client Rights and Responsibilities**

## **Clients have the right to:**

- Access a service of consistently high quality
- Access a service which is safe and free of discrimination, abuse and neglect
- Have your independence supported and respected
- Be assessed individually and make choices and decisions about using the services we provide, based on your own needs and preferences
- Receive information in a manner that is accessible to you, so that you can make choices about the options available. For example, if you need information in large print, by email, or through the National Relay Service (NRS) please let us know
- Respect for your cultural needs
- Respect for your privacy and confidentiality. Your personal records will reflect only information which is needed to provide delivery of our services to you and will not be passed on to third parties without your

consent. You have the right to access your personal records and if you make a request to do so, they will be made available within a reasonable time

- Give feedback in the form of compliments and complaints about our service to help us plan improvements. Any complaints will be dealt with fairly and promptly, and your use of our service would not be restricted in any way due to you making the complaint;
- Clear communication about fees
- Have an advocate act on your behalf. We can assist you to find an advocate upon request

## **Clients have the following responsibilities:**

- Follow any requests made by TBBCT team members to act in a safe manner
- Book transport at least **three working days** prior to your appointment
- Respect the rights of other clients, volunteers and staff to have a safe environment, free from discrimination and abuse, including offensive language
- Respect the confidentiality of any information you may obtain about other passengers, volunteers and staff and respect their privacy
- Keep the office informed of any changes to your bookings, address, contact details, or the level of assistance you require
- Ensure you tell the office approximately how long each appointment will take and of any related appointments and places you may need to visit on each trip

- Should you have a serious infectious disease such as tuberculosis, influenza, scabies or measles etc please notify the office prior to undertaking any booked trips. Take reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of spread
- Bus passengers should be particularly mindful of the risk of spreading flu. Please don't ride on the bus if you think you may be contagious

### **On the day of the trip:**

- Be ready on time (earlier if it is raining)
- Have the correct money available
- Do not eat, or smoke in the vehicle
- Bring your mobility parking card, if you have one
- Tell the driver if you are feeling unwell
- Wear a seatbelt. If you have a medical exemption, advise the office and carry it with you whenever you travel with community transport

## **Your Safety**

Your safety and that of other passengers, volunteers and staff is our highest priority, so please follow any instructions given by your driver or bus attendant.

Our drivers and attendants are trained in the safest way to assist people in and out of vehicles. Please allow them to assist if you need help.

We cannot physically lift or carry people, but we can take the time to assist people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids to ensure they get safely to their appointment.

All passengers must be seated before the vehicle moves. If a seatbelt is fitted, it must be fastened, unless you can show the driver a medical exemption signed by your doctor. **The medical exemption must be carried when using our service.**

Our team members are not allowed to lift you if you fall. If you can't get up by yourself, or if you have a medical emergency, the driver will call for an ambulance. If you wish we can also notify your emergency contact person.

To minimise the risk of trips and falls, we recommend you bring any mobility aid that you need to keep steady, wear comfortable and well fitted footwear, a hat and sunglasses to reduce glare and ask for assistance if you feel unsafe getting in or out of the vehicle.

Please ensure any shopping items are not too heavy to lift safely. Our drivers and assistants are not able to lift heavy items for you. If you are unsure about an item, please ask the assistant before you purchase it or ask if the store will have it delivered to you.

To be eligible to use community transport, you need to have a reasonable degree of mobility and to travel independently. If your needs change, we might recommend you travel with a carer, or suggest another service that is more suitable for you.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Tweed Byron and Ballina Community Transport are committed to ensuring your personal details are kept confidential and only disclosed to any third party with your informed consent. Personal information about clients is gathered for statistical reports, which TBBCT regularly provides to our funding bodies. However, these reports do not include names, addresses or other identifying information.

The only exceptions to this confidentiality rule, are if there is a serious, imminent threat to an individual's life, health or safety; or if we are legally obliged under the NSW Crimes Act (1900) or the NSW Coroner's Act (1980). In these instances, we would be compelled to notify police about serious criminal offences, or the coroner's office regarding investigations involving the death of a person.

We only collect information about you (with your consent) which is necessary to provide you with a high-quality service and for the function of our organisation. This information enables us to provide a service that meets



your needs with sensitivity and respect. Client files are held within our secure, password protected booking system, which is accessed only by authorised staff.

Our drivers and/or attendants are provided with key information such as your name, address, phone number and information relating to any relevant disability you may have, to provide you with a comfortable and safe service.

We recognise that you have the right to access any personal information that we retain about you on file. If you wish to do so, please put your request in writing and we will make an appointment for you to view your file within a reasonable time. Should you find information to be incorrect, you have the right to have it corrected.

## **Feedback – we want to know what you think of our services!**

Your feedback is very important to us. It helps ensure we provide a high-quality service that meets the needs of our clients. Your input may lead to service improvements, so please feel free to contact us with any feedback. We have a simple feedback form available in our TBBCT vehicles, on our website and it can be posted to you. Or you can simply call, email or write a letter. See the **Contact Us** page for details of how to get in touch.

## **Advocates – someone to help you communicate with us**

Sometimes you might need assistance when it comes to communicating with us. In this situation, you could call upon an advocate. An advocate is someone who has the authority to communicate with us on your behalf – they represent your legal and human rights, as well as your best interests.

An advocate might be a carer or family member, or they may be a professional advocate. Our office has a register

of organisations that provide advocacy services and can help you to get in contact with an appropriate advocate. Call the office if you would like assistance with this.

TBBCT welcomes your use of an advocate, be it to help you access our services, make decisions and choices about our services, or to negotiate on your behalf throughout a complaint process. We would cooperate with your advocate and treat them with respect and dignity.

If you would like to have an advocate represent you in communications with TBBCT, you must put this in writing to us, including the person's contact details and ensure that they know of your decision. If you no longer want to use this advocate, you should also put this in writing to us so our records are up to date.

## **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with, or have concerns about, any aspect of our service, we want to hear from you. You have a right to complain and by telling us about the problem we can make improvements.

Most problems are easily fixed, if we know about them. A simple phone call could resolve the problem and save you unnecessary worry in the future. For example, if you find it difficult to get in and out of a particular vehicle, we can note that on your file and make sure you have a more appropriate vehicle for future trips.

There are several ways you can approach us to make a complaint: write a letter, submit a form online, email a staff member or call the office and someone will listen to you and record your complaint over the phone.

## **How do I make a complaint?**

You can make your complaint personally if you choose. We also recognise your right to be able to be supported by and communicate through, an intermediary, such as a friend, family member, carer, or advocate.

You can nominate the person at TBBCT that you would like to be your key contact throughout the process and you can let that person know your desired outcome. Only the person you choose to speak with and the people directly involved will hear the details of your complaint. The nature of your complaint may be discussed with other staff or management committee members, to help us improve our service. If this happens, be assured you will not be identified.

## **What happens next?**

The details of your complaint will be recorded securely to ensure confidentiality. You will be treated respectfully and your complaint handled objectively and fairly. The CEO will be in touch with you as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours, to acknowledge receipt of your complaint. The details will be considered and we will get

back to you, in most cases within two weeks, to discuss the outcome with you. Be assured, there will not be negative repercussions for you for having lodged the complaint. If you decide to stop using our service because of your complaint, you can return at any time.

### **If you are dissatisfied with the outcome**

You have a right to appeal the decision if you are unhappy with the outcome. Please contact our management committee and they will review your complaint.

✉ TBBCT Management Committee, c/- Shop 9/14  
Middleton Street Byron Bay 2481

If you remain dissatisfied, you can address your complaint to the NSW Ombudsman. They can assist you if you believe you have been treated unfairly. Their contact details are as follows:

☎ 1800 451 524

💻 [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)

## **Discontinuation of Service**

Unfortunately, there may be times when we must withdraw a service. Examples of such occasions are as follows:

- Your care needs increase and you require more assistance than we can safely provide
- You are moving away from Tweed, Byron and Ballina shires. We may however, be able to refer you to another community transport service
- You are allocated a Home Care package. Your home care service provider can give you more information about your transport options.
- Your behaviour creates concerns for the health and safety of other clients, volunteers or staff – this includes verbal abuse
- Very occasionally, priority may be given to another client whose needs are determined to be greater (for example limited seats on the shopping or social bus, or an individual medical appointment prioritised over a social one)

## **RMS Parking Permits**

If you are a Mobility Parking Scheme card holder, please bring your card along. This enables our drivers to park as close as possible to your destination.

If you have mobility impairment, but don't hold a permit, please consider applying for one. Applications are available from Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), or NSW Service Centre. You can also download them from [www.rms.gov.au](http://www.rms.gov.au).



## **Contact Us**

Equity of access and inclusion are very important at Tweed Byron and Ballina Community Transport, so we offer a number of ways for you to contact us which are designed to accommodate a range of needs and preferences:

**Phone: 1300 875 895** Leave a message on our answering machine if you need to contact us out of hours, or staff are busy on other calls. The machine is checked early each weekday morning and regularly throughout the day.

**Email:** [admin@community-transport.org.au](mailto:admin@community-transport.org.au)

**Post:** 9/14 Middleton Street Byron Bay 2481

**Website:** [www.community-transport.org.au](http://www.community-transport.org.au)

**Tweed Office** 2/14 Amber Rd, Tweed Heads South

**Byron Office** Shop 9, 14 Middleton St, Byron Bay

**Ballina Office** - Kentwell Community Centre

Cnr Moon St and Ballina Rd Ballina

## **National Relay Service (NRS)**

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS):

TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1300 875 895

**Speak and Listen users** phone 1300 555 727, ask for 1300 875 895

**Internet relay users** connect to the NRS ([www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)) and then ask for 1300 875 895

**Video relay users** choose the available NRS video relay contact on Skype and ask for 1300 875 895

SMS relay users phone 0423 677 767 and ask for 1300 875 895

For information about **aged care services** contact

My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**

[www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

For information about **disability services** contact

NDIS on 1800 800 110 [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

or your local council

**6626 7000** [www.byron.nsw.gov.au](http://www.byron.nsw.gov.au)

**6670 2400** [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au)

**6686 4444** [www.ballina.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au)