

## TOPIC: CASE STUDY ON COMMUNITY WHEELS FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

### 1) Tell us about Community Wheels NSW. What do you do?

*Community Wheels Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation that provides transport services for eligible seniors, pensioners, those with accessibility needs or those who have limited access to public transport. Our organisation's primary goal is to help people maintain independence and quality of life by offering safe and reliable transport options. We offer safe rides to medical appointments, shopping, social activities, and other important places. It is funded by the state and federal Government.*



### 2) Who is community transport for?

*Community transport is for people who have trouble using regular public transport or driving. It helps people stay connected and get around. The service is especially designed to help them get to medical appointments, participate in social activities, do shopping and maintain independent living at home. Some groups who benefit from it include:*

1. **Older people:** *Those who can't drive anymore or find it hard to use regular buses or trains.*
2. **People with disabilities:** *Those who need special vehicles or help to travel safely.*
3. **Financially and/or transport disadvantaged:** *Eligible community members that are transport disadvantaged due to health or financial reasons and aren't eligible for any other government funding.*



### 3) What role do volunteers play in your organisation?

*Volunteers play a vital role in helping our organisation run smoothly. They give their time and effort to assist with tasks like driving vehicles, helping clients get on and off the vehicles that might be for social/shopping programs or medical appointments, or calling the clients for welfare checks. Without volunteers, it would be hard to provide the service to those who need it.*

### 4) What do your volunteers enable for people living with disabilities?

1. **Volunteer Drivers provide Accessible Rides:** A Volunteer Driver for community wheels plays a key role in assisting older adults and people with disabilities, helping them access essential services, appointments, and social activities.

#### **a. Assisting with Boarding and Disembarking:**

*Help passengers, especially those with mobility issues, to get in and out of the vehicle safely, using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids as needed.*

#### **b. Respecting Individual Needs:**

*Accommodate any special needs of passengers, such as adjusting the vehicle for wheelchair access or assisting with specific personal requirements.*







2. **Volunteer Driver Assistants with Personal Help:** Volunteers give one-on-one support with drivers in helping passengers with boarding and disembarking from the bus, especially those with mobility aids, wheelchairs, or other needs.

- a. **Ensure Safety:** Ensure all passengers are seated securely and safely and assist with fastening seat belts or securing mobility equipment.
- b. **Provide Support During the Journey:** Offer assistance to drivers and passengers during the ride, such as helping with navigation, answering questions, or providing reassurance.
- c. **Support Driver:** Helping the driver by ensuring passengers are settled and ready to disembark at the correct stops.



d. **Assist with Special Needs:** Providing extra help to passengers with specific needs, such as guiding them to their destination or helping with personal items.



2. **Volunteer Office Staff by Encouraging Social Participation:** *Our volunteers help people take part in activities and stay connected with their community by doing welfare checks, make sure they are doing alright and adjust schedules to make travel easier for those with special needs.*

*Additionally, our volunteers embrace the diversity of the people they assist, offering support across different languages and cultural backgrounds. By understanding and respecting the unique needs of individuals from varied communities.*

**Fostering Community Connections:** *Volunteers help reduce isolation and make people feel part of their community. They help create a more inclusive and accessible environment for everyone, regardless of language, culture, or ability. Through these efforts, volunteers help foster an environment of acceptance, participation, and belonging for people living with disabilities.*

*In short, volunteers make it easier for people to get around, stay safe, and be included in everyday activities.*

## **5) How do you accommodate all volunteers?**

*Accommodating all volunteers means making sure their needs are met so they have a positive and successful experience.*

1. *Provide detailed descriptions of each volunteer role, so everyone understands what is expected of them. Tailoring roles to volunteers' skills, preferences, and abilities.*
2. *Ensure volunteers can easily reach out for support or clarification. This includes providing clear contact details and regular check-ins.*
3. *Offer different volunteer shifts to fit into volunteers' schedules, as they may have other commitments and let them choose tasks that match their time and energy levels.*



4. *Ensure volunteers have everything they need to do their job, like training, support and guidance.*
5. *Make sure everyone feels respected, no matter their background, age, or abilities and to be mindful of cultural and personal needs, such as language preferences or religious practices.*
6. *Regularly ask volunteers for feedback to understand how they're doing, what could be better and give them new opportunities to grow and take on more responsibility.*
7. *Organize events or social gatherings to help volunteers connect and feel part of the team, making sure they feel like they're part of something important and celebrate achievements together.*

## **6) What is something you've learnt about accessibility?**

*One important thing I've learned about accessibility in community Wheels is that it aims to be inclusive and user-friendly for everyone. **True accessibility is not just about physical access, but also about providing support and consideration throughout the entire journey.** This means ensuring the transport options are safe, comfortable, and easy to use for elderly people and those with disabilities.*

*a. **Accessible Vehicles:** Buses or cars need to have ramps, low floors, and space for wheelchairs and mobility aids.*

*b. **Personal Assistance:** Drivers and helpers may need to assist passengers with getting in and out of the vehicle or carrying bags (up to 4 bags only-with weight limit).*

*c. **Clear Information:** Easy-to-understand details about routes, schedules and how to get help are important for passengers.*

*d. **Flexibility:** Transport services should be flexible to adjust to passengers' needs, like last-minute changes or specific requests.*

*e. **Comfort and Safety:** It's not just about getting passengers from one place to another, but also making sure the journey is comfortable and stress-free.*





## **7) What have you found is the benefit of inclusivity to your organisation, and the communities you support?**

*Transport has a vital role to play in connecting people to opportunities and improving quality of life. To support social inclusion, transport options should strive to reflect the needs of the diverse communities that they serve, as well as fulfil ‘the 4 As’: available, accessible, affordable and acceptable.*

### **1. Stronger Community Connections**

**For the Organisation:** *Inclusivity brings people together, creating a culture of respect and teamwork, which strengthens the organisation.*

**For the Community:** *It ensures that everyone, no matter their background or abilities, can participate, helping create a community where everyone feels valued and included.*

### **2. Expanded Reach and Influence**

**For the Organisation:** *Being inclusive attracts more volunteers, partners, and supporters, leading to more resources, ideas, and greater impact.*

**For the Community:** *Accessible services mean that more people, including those who may have been left out before, can benefit, leading to better results.*

### **3. Better Reputation**

**For the Organisation:** *Organisations that value inclusivity is seen as responsible and fair, which builds trust and a strong reputation in the community.*

**For the Community:** Inclusive practices show fairness and equality, inspiring other groups to do the same and helping everyone feel respected.

#### **4. Better Services and Support**

**For the Organisation:** Listening to people from all walks of life helps improve services, ensuring they meet the real needs of the community.

**For the Community:** The community benefits from services designed to support everyone, making sure no one is left out.

#### **5. Building Trust and Loyalty**

**For the Organisation:** An inclusive approach builds trust, leading to long-term support from those who use the services and those who help.

**For the Community:** Inclusivity creates a sense of fairness and respect, strengthening the bonds within the community and making everyone feel safe and supported.

#### **In Summary:**

*Inclusivity is the key to building stronger, more connected organisations and communities. By embracing diversity, everyone benefits—organisations grow, new ideas emerge, and communities become more united and supportive. When we include everyone, we create a world where everyone belongs and has a chance to contribute.*

### **8) What would you say to someone considering volunteering?**

*If you're considering volunteering, I can tell you it's a very rewarding experience that truly makes a difference in people's lives. You'll be helping those who struggle to get around, like the elderly or people with disabilities, ensuring they can access vital services and participate in social activities that they might otherwise miss.*

*I joined as a volunteer myself to learn and expand my horizons. I learned about the challenges people face when it comes to mobility, and I've learned so much along the way. Not only have I gained valuable skills, but I've also had the opportunity to connect with a wonderful group of people who share a passion for helping others.*

*Volunteering in is not just about giving—it's also about personal growth. Whether you're driving, assisting passengers, or helping with coordination, you'll see firsthand how your efforts improve lives. It's an opportunity to be part of a team that values compassion, inclusivity, and making a difference. You'll walk away with a sense of pride, knowing that you've played a role in making transportation more accessible for everyone in your community.*

**9) How do you celebrate International Day of People with Disability? What do you think of the 2024 theme (Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future)?**

*On **International Day of People with Disability**, it's an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of individuals with disabilities and highlight the need for continued improvements to make services, including transportation, more accessible.*

*The **2024 theme, “Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future,”** is a call to action. It highlights the importance of giving people with disabilities a stronger voice in shaping policies and decisions. In community transport, this could involve people with disabilities helping to design and improve transportation systems that meet their needs. Their experiences and leadership are key to creating better, more sustainable solutions.*

*This theme encourages us to move from merely accommodating people with disabilities to empowering them to take the lead in creating inclusive and lasting change, ensuring equal participation in all aspects of society.*