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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

O/N 60924

THE ALLEN CONSULTING GROUP

REVIEW OF THE DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**HEARING CONDUCTED AT: COMMODORE ON THE PARK
MOUNT GAMBIER
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

DATE: 7 AUGUST 2007

MR L. TRUDZIK: Time to commence the proceedings, so welcome everybody to the Mount Gambier public hearing as part of the review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport. My name is Les Trudzik. I'm the Chair of the public hearing. I'm from the Allen Consulting Group. With me is Tanuja Doss also from the
5 Allen Consulting Group, and Kym Starr as observer from the Department of Transport and Regional Services.

We are conducting this review on behalf of the Australian Government Minister for Transport and Regional Services and our report will be provided to the Minister, Mark
10 Vaile. This is the first five-year review of the standards since they were implemented in 2002 and our role is to progress against the requirements, or to assess progress against the requirements in the standards being mindful that compliance - the compliance timetable that sets out a schedule of compliance from 2002 to 2032 with compliance
15 milestones every five years. So that means that only partial compliance is required by 31 December this year, 2007.

It is important, I should note, that the role of the review is not assess whether there should be standards, or not, but to assess the extent to which the standards have been
20 effective in improving accessibility of transport to people with disabilities. The review has established a web site, www.dvatransportreview.com.au. We've released an issues paper and we've advertised nationally for submissions.

This hearing is one of a number of hearings being conducted around the country in capital cities and in seven regional centres. The role of the hearings is to provide all
25 interested parties with an opportunity to speak with us, to provide us with information on their experience with the standards, how effective they consider the standards to have been to date. Good morning. I think we will try and find some extra chairs to that you can - there are some seats over here on the left.

30 Just to continue with my opening remarks: we intend for today's meeting to be relatively informal. You will have a chance to speak about the matters you consider most important and we will in turn, or we may in turn ask you some questions and discuss these matters further with you. If you are here to observe and I will come back to that in a moment in terms of whether there are any other submissions that we're not
35 aware of.

We would ask that you respect those that are speaking and not to interrupt or speak over them as they are speaking. The hearing is being recorded through Ausland [sic] and so that means there will be an official transcript that will be available on our web site, for
40 down-loading from our web site. We have also provided copies of the review paper and I think if anybody hasn't got one we should be able to provide that. We are also accepting written submissions through to 24 August so there still is an opportunity beyond today for a written submission to be made to the review and we certainly welcome those submissions.
45

In terms of other details, tea and coffee I think is pretty evident over in the bank. I think the toilet facilities are out and to the right as you head out of the room. To date we have two - we have two formal submissions that have been scheduled, one at 9 o'clock with

Russell Peate from the District Council of Grant, and one at 9.45, that's from the Ontag Accessible Hire Cars organisation. I believe we also will be having a presentation from Disability, South Australia?

5 MR B. BARNEY: Not so much a presentation but informal feedback.

MR TRUDZIK: Informal feedback. So at this stage, depending on how the 9 o'clock one goes we may be able to do that before the 9.45 otherwise we will schedule that after the 9.45 presentation.

10

MR BARNEY: All right.

MR TRUDZIK: Are there any others here today that want to have a time-slot scheduled for a submission? No? Okay, well, that should be sort of the schedule for the morning. Are there any questions before we start with the first? Okay. Well then, let me welcome Russell, and I think Russell is going to use an overhead so I will step out and I guess if you could sort of introduce yourself and your organisation for the recording and then your presentation, or your submission.

15

20 MR R. PEATE: Thank you. Russell Peate; I'm the CEO of the District Council of Grant and I have Ms Nelson with me. Chris is the former Airport Manager for the Mount Gambier and District Airport and retained, I guess, on a consultancy basis, an "as needs" basis and our new Airport Manager will be commencing on 27 August so we are in the interim phase at the present time. Thank you for the opportunity to make a presentation to the Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002. We do have some overheads that I will work through. I do have copies then that I can provide to you after the presentation.

25

30 It is a little bit blurry but still readable, I think. The District Council is the owner and operator of the Mount Gambier and District Airport, so that is specifically what we are referring to and addressing as part of this review. We became the owner in 1990 under Local Ownership Program and we're a certified airport under CASA and security-controlled airport under the recently brought in Aviation Transport Security Act.

30

35 The airport is serviced by primarily two airline companies, O'Connor Airlines, who provide services to Adelaide and return on a daily basis, and I think that is now six services per day rather than eight, and REX Airlines who provide services to Melbourne and Adelaide on a daily basis about 15 times per day; obviously, a number of private aircraft that use the facility as well as the Royal Flying Doctor Services. We have also recently completed a 15-year strategic plan to look at what are the needs and what are the demands impacting on the airport and how do we address those, and how do we position the airport to progress and grow for the future.

40

45 We are in the throes of looking at appointing a contract, or part-time project manager to implement the recommendations from this plan. Some of the statistics to do with the airport, just to give a little bit of a background to it is that the number of passengers has obviously grown over the last five years in particular, to 2006/07 to over 109,000

passengers. So you can see there the continued growth that the airport has experienced, and the patronage through that - through the airport.

5 That gives you just a bit of an idea of the growth rate. Even last year was about, somewhere around about 7 per cent, or something, in terms of the growth rate of passengers through the airport. The mid-range projection for the strategic plan is around about continuing 5/6 per cent. We think that is reasonable projection and that's what we're basing, I guess, facility services and infrastructure on for the future, is around about a 5 to 6 per cent continuing growth rate.

10 We recognise as part of the issues paper that was issued there are a number of questions that can be answered. We didn't intend to answer all of those because some of them are not applicable whereas others are more so. Suffice to say that council supports the policy underlying the Disability Discrimination Act and we're keen to ensure that where
15 we can, people with disabilities are able to access and enjoy the facilities and services of the airport.

It is understood that REX Airlines, and certainly we don't purport to speak on their behalf, nor O'Connor's, but having implemented a loading device for passengers with
20 disabilities where I understand that O'Connor Airlines have obtained an exemption due to the size of their particular aircraft. As I've mentioned we have got a 15-year strategic plan for the airport and we're in the throes of implementing that, which will incorporate further Disability Standards where we can.

25 An important point to highlight, I guess, is that over the last few years, given security issues, as a smaller regional airport we have had the impost, I guess, of having to comply with the Aviation Transport Security Act and that's meant infrastructure; that's meant a transport security plan; that's meant a whole range of documentation and requirements to comply with that and at times quite difficulty, given that our
30 employment at the airport effectively is one full-time person, the Airport Manager.

We do have support from, obviously, the administration from council but, effectively, the Airport Manager is required to meet all of the requirements, legislative and otherwise, of the various Acts that impact on the airport. Our belief is that given the
35 various legislative requirements, particularly security, that have been brought into place, is that your smaller regional airports, given their resources and employment, effectively would not always be fully aware of the Disability Transport Standards nor their obligations due to simply the requirements and the resources that they have.

40 We believe that support services, information and assistance from the Department of Transport and Regional Services would help in providing a better understanding and assisting with the implementation of the obligations of the public transport provider. Many of the smaller regional airports are similar to the Mount Gambier and District Airport in probably having only one full-time employee, or maybe one full-time
45 employee and a part-time assistant and that is, effectively, the practical reality of trying to implement as best we can the various legislative requirements.

Just to highlight one of the major issues that we have is the conflict, I guess, between sometimes the Disability Standards and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority Requirements, and we understand the purpose of the Standards and the fact that they come into force on a staggered timetable, and they are just two examples in terms of standards for waiting rooms, lighting, alarms, etcetera, and standards for access paths, resting areas, ramps and doors by 31 December 2007.

However, airport operators particularly, may face some unique challengers in seeking to comply with these standards because of the fact that the airport owners and operators are subject to a myriad of other legislation as well, which is the Civil Aviation Act, the Civil Aviation Regulations, the Civil Aviation Orders and the myriad of other instruments issued under the regime including especially CASA 139 Manual of Standards that the certified airports are required to comply with. To provide but one example of some of the conflict that potentially may exist as between the Standards and CASA requirements, section 5.1 of the Standards provides that:

There must be resting points for passengers along an access path if the walking distance between facilities, or services exceeds 60 metres.

And:

A resting point must provide seats.

Section 6.5.2.2 of the Manual of Standards, CASA 139, provides something, to some degree, contrary to that:

An aircraft on an aircraft parking position must be separated from any object, other than the aerobridge, by a distance of not less than that determined using a particular Table which specifies distances.

So council would contend that there appears to be no clearly established rules of interpretation of how the Courts would even resolve conflict between the Standards and the CASA Safety Requirements under the Civil Aviation Act, or the instruments underneath it. We believe that a practical option would be for the Government to provide a resolution now before there's any further existing conflict, or the potential for conflict comes to reality.

Council considers that most of the regional and smaller regional airports will suffer from a lack of information and resources to implement the Disability Standards simply because of the various legislative requirements, manuals, documentation, security requirements that certified airports are required to comply with. Practically, owners and operators of airports would comply with CASA requirements where there is a conflict above and beyond the Disability Standards simply because CASA has the ability to remove the airport's licence to operate.

We believe that implementing accessibility over the time period could be improved through providing more information to regional airports, particularly smaller regional airports, as well as, say, a designated contact person that may be able to assist through

telephone, or whatever other means would be practical. As the owner and operator of the airport at Mount Gambier we haven't receiving any complaints that I'm aware of, in the last 10 years, regarding accessibility to the airport, its services and facilities, and we also support the submission that has been forwarded by the Australian Airports Association which was dated 20 July. We have a copy to provide as part of the presentation today, to the review panel. That is, effectively, or very briefly, our presentation. We are open for any questions that you may have.

MR TRUDZIK: Thank you, Russell, for that. I guess one of the things I would like to follow up is, you have - one of the statements you made that you believe that this is a general issue for owners and operators of small and regional airports, or the issues that you have raised are representative of others, have you had discussions with others. What is the basis of your comments in that regard?

MR NELSON: Well, the Mount Gambier Airport is a member of the Australian Airports Association. That is the only major forum that's available to us to associate as aircraft operating bodies. It's a series of State divisions. Each State has a stand-alone unit and all of those units meet broadly on an annual basis but good and have a vehicle which will carry out concerns.

Now, it is a fact that all airports have this problem which is the conflict between the CASA regulations and the new disability provisions and it is simply not practical to put seats across the tarmac. I would think that in the main our concerns are based on the air-side areas rather than the terminal areas. I mean, CASA doesn't involve itself in the land-side areas as they're called, it's simply the air-side areas, but it isn't practical to have seats across where aeroplanes have got to come in and out.

They're very big machines, they're not like a motor car that can go through nearly confined spaces, they need a lot of operating space and it's quite hazardous to move them where there are obstacles. So there's lots and lots of regulations. The Manual of Standards is a very, very large document. This is in fine print and it's the issues that you need to deal with, the spaces that you have to provide are, in many cases, contrary to applications in these standards. Other issues, and particularly lighting, are where the Disability Standards want certain nominated lighting standards where, from a safety point of view a pilot can't be confronted with those sorts of lighting systems.

So, again, there's a conflict between the two sets of legislation and our concern, and the concern of all regional airports which have RPT services is similar, but these things are going to cause a lot of difficulty to implement from one side to the other. And as Russell has pointed out we would probably need to comply with CASA first because if we don't they can cancel our operating licence and you don't have an airport at all, which doesn't help anyone.

MR TRUDZIK: I was, in fact, going to ask other examples of the lighting, you have mentioned that. Are there any other areas of major conflict, or tension between the Standards that you could point us to?

MR NELSON: Well, to be honest, I have not read the Standards in full. As you're aware they're a very large document and, as Russell said, I mean, we just don't have the manpower, or the resources to study this, so we rely on the advice of the association which provides more as a collective enhancement and they would be in the better
5 position, I suppose, to give accurate lists of issues. What we're about is not to try and minimise the Disability Standards, simply make them achievable broadly in the context of the two sets of regulations we have to operate under.

MR PEATE: Can I further say that you highlighted that submissions are due by 24
10 August. We have prepared a brief presentation but there is the intention to forward a submission by that date and to include some of those examples that you refer to so that you have got some examples to deal with.

MR TRUDZIK: And certainly we're interested to identify the major areas of conflict,
15 and lighting has come up, I think, in a few contexts. The resting place issue is one that I'm not aware of but I haven't shared all the sessions, but that's certainly something that will be noted.

MR NELSON: If I may also suggest, people with hearing difficulties, I mean, they're
20 very difficult things to address at airports where the noise levels are very, very high, so there's a whole range of things where assistance can be provided but compliance with the written legislation is very difficult.

MR TRUDZIK: The other part of your submission, Russell, a lot of it, I guess, the
25 resourcing implications on, I think it is a one-person, or one-FTE operation. Have you any - can you provide any specific suggestions for how better support, or information could be provided?

MR PEATE: I think - it's a good question. I think, practically, what we need to do is
30 try to put ourselves in the position of managing and operating a smaller regional airport with one full-time person and practically a way, I guess, to do that is to have, if there isn't in existence at least some more information, that's provided to them; a hard copy, web information, a designated contact person that they can phone.

35 For example, if we're planning the upgrade of our terminal or facilities out there we will have two people. We will have an airport manager, we will have a building manager, or council. Now, the building manager, or council, has a whole range of other duties are relevant in terms of assessing building applications and asset management, etcetera. He will be aware, or she will be aware of the Disability Standards to some degree.

40 However, getting further information, I guess, and having a person they can deal with in terms of planning that, would help. Even if we contract a contractor to do that I guess we're relying that that contractor then has a good working knowledge of the Disability Standards in putting that structure in place. So, for example, your tactile areas and other
45 requirements of the Standards that would need to be upgraded and implemented an airport manager, with respect, won't have the full understanding; a building manager will have some but not a full understanding. And if there, I guess, someone that they're aware of that they can phone and say, "Well, look, we're planning this particular work,

what are your suggestions as to how it can be designed so that it can better comply with the Disability Standards?" - something simple like that.

5 MR TRUDZIK: Thank you. In terms of the complaints, or the lack of complaints that you're aware of, I noted that one of the two airlines hasn't, or one has sought an exemption, the other has a loading device; has that created any feedback from - - -

10 MR NELSON: The loading device seems to work quite well but it's still limited into the type of disabilities it can manage, I mean, the person has to be able to get on to the device, so it can handle small wheelchairs and that type of thing but then wheelchairs won't fit down the cabins of regional aeroplanes. So there are a lot of people who will still be discriminated from air travel simply by virtue that they can't be accommodated with what's there.

15 I'm not aware of how the airlines manage that themselves. I did have dealings with O'Connor's, I used to work for them in the past and it was quite an issue for us to get people with disabilities up and into the aeroplane and did cause offence to some people when you tried to assist them manually. So I think in the end O'Connor's found it was better not to attempt to do it, and now that the legislation allowed them to get that approval they took it.

20

MR TRUDZIK: Okay, well, I think they are the points that I liked to follow up. Are there any - - -

25 MS GARSENNI: I was just going to say, in regards to your wheelchair section, when people booked tickets for that why aren't they told by the airlines that certain people have to manually move themselves from the chair into the aircraft, because we have had that situation with ourselves where we have had to go back to the airport and actually physically put the disabled person from the chair to the other because the airlines won't touch them.

30

MR GARSENNI: Yes.

35 MS GARSENNI: Now, this lady who had taken her husband, wasn't even informed that this was going to occur and they said, "Well, if you can't do it yourself you don't go on your flight."

MR GARSENNI: And you are talking to Mr Peate about having no complaints because nobody has actually contacted you. We're actually the main source of operations here for disabled people and we hear the complaints every time a disabled person tries to access the airport - - -

40

MS GARSENNI: I don't know if they know where to put complaints? I don't know whether that, perhaps they just say to REX, or whoever, "I have a complaint", and that's where it stays? Perhaps you should have something where people actually know where to go back to actually put complaints?

45

MR TRUDZIK: Look, could we - sorry - - -

MS GARDSENNI: Sorry?

MR TRUDZIK: - - - for the recording, have your names - - -

5 MR GARDSENNI: Yes, sorry, my name's Ole Gardsenni. I'm Proprietor of Greater City Access, Wheelchair Access. This is my wife, Tracey.

MR TRUDZIK: Thank you.

10 MR GARDSENNI: Just getting back onto that subject we have had - because we take a lot of people to the airport now, a lot of them suffering from some sort of disability, it's getting to the stage now where we have to, as operators, take them to the airport, gain the chair, the airport chair as we call it, transfer them, as operators, transfer them and then a lot of times we actually have to wheel them out to the aircraft, get on to the
15 lift with the patient, or the clients, get into the aircraft with the clients and then we have to manually transfer them because - - -

MS GARDSENNI: The staff won't do it.

20 MR GARDSENNI: - - - the staff won't do it. Now, this is the airline staff at the front counter and the airline staff at the plane.

MS GARDSENNI: Because some of the - - -

25 MR GARDSENNI: Now, whose job is it? Is it our job as transport operators to do, or is it the aircraft operators job to do it? It is a problem and as the aged become older this is going to be a large problem in this area down here because we're finding a lot more are travelling via aircraft to Adelaide for appointments.

30 MS GARDSENNI: And also, if you do book and you say "My husband is in a wheelchair", these people should be informed of the possibilities of what's going to come ahead of them at the airport. I mean, this one lady was basically, "Well, you're not going to go to Melbourne because we're not doing it."

35 MR GARDSENNI: Yes, on the other side, I'm a part-owner of Lake City Taxis so we're out at the airport 78 times a week, right? So I do think that we have some expertise and, look, at the end of the day the airport terminal and its facilities are lacking as a regional airport, right? We have got oldies that have had to get off their
40 plane, walk across the tarmac, then walk down the aisle rail to get their luggage and where are they standing, in the middle of the rain, in that little area where all the baggage is, right?

MS GARDSENNI: Yes.

45 MR GARDSENNI: There is no shelter for them, right?

MS GARDSENNI: No, you're all up the hallway, all crushed in.

MR GARDSENNI: And this is an argument we have had for many, many years but obviously falls on deaf ears.

5 MR PEATE: If I can respond in relation to that? There are probably about three issues that are involved. Obviously, in terms of the physical infrastructure at the airport that is something that, as a council as the owner and operator we can address in terms of the access to the aircraft, and whatever, well, that's obviously the responsibility and onus of the airline operators who are not here to present their case as such and, I mean, we try to take on board as best we can. We, or I haven't, as a council we haven't received any
10 concerns or issues in relation to those matters that have been raised so we're in the throes of working through that as best we can with that 15-year strategic plan.

MR NELSON: If I may also make a comment on that? I think that the public are quite confused these days with transport about where the responsibilities lie and the
15 passengers themselves don't take a great deal of responsibility. I mean, large numbers of people will just make a web booking for an air flight at a cheap fare and expect that's the end of it, they have bought their ticket and they will be handled. They don't know who to go to.

20 I mean, the airport gets hundreds of calls a week from people wanting airline information which we simply can't provide. It's the airline's job. They're the people who take the money from the passenger, they should provide those services and it always bemuses me why the airport's involved in the interaction with passengers at all, other than to provide a facility which allows the aircraft to land and the people to come
25 in, where the interaction between the passengers is not an airport issue.

MR BARNEY: Could I please make a comment as well, if that's okay? Brett Barney from Disability SA. It's not just regional airports, owner/operators at regional airports and the operators of the airline. In regional areas that this affects, as a Service Co-
30 ordinator with Disability SA, we might feel confident that it works at this end but, and I discussed this yesterday just in a regular case that came up, that if it's not stated when you book the flight that you need the extra support at the other end in Adelaide, we can organise Red Cross to meet someone at the door of the airport for getting them from the plane, where they disembark into the facility to the door of the airport, can sometimes
35 be a major operation unless when they book it it's stated.

MR TRUDZIK: Yes.

40 MR BARNEY: And not many people know to state that when they book. Usually, it's after the fact and it's a renegotiation and it's a "Well, you should have told us beforehand."

MR TRUDZIK: Well, Brett, could I ask, at this end do you get involved in providing support for some of the situations that have just been discussed?
45

MR BARNEY: We would be involved if we were consulted before the booking. We would be involved if we had a support worker who was taking that person, or a volunteer from Red Cross, or we were paying someone. If that person didn't have any

support other than their unpaid carer we wouldn't be involved other than advocacy on their behalf.

5 MS N. LING: Can I just say I have - my mother has a disability and she can't get around airports and obviously, coming from a multi-cultural perspective she can hardly answer in English and all she has to do is go to the airline, you know, the consult, regardless of what airline it is, and that airline will organise everything for her, you know, wheelchair access, transportation, everything, pass her booking, just not just at the end of the web site or the telephone, but just going there.

10 So in the regional centre, this is Whyalla where she lives, REX organises everything for her. She gets her ticket, she has to go to Adelaide; REX counter people help her all the way so I think we might have an issue perhaps just this - this one here perhaps might be an exemplar, or something that has actually been improved on.

15 MR NELSON: I think where the passenger is known to the airline they would certainly get better services - - -

20 MS LING: Well - - -

MR NELSON: - - - which I think what we're discussing are people who come up out of the blue and then they're disappointed.

25 MS LING: Yes, but she doesn't have the language to actually organise that over the phone, or on a web, and she relies on getting to the airport and having the front counter staff deal with them when she gets there. She has never had any problems with the Whyalla Airport.

30 MR BARNEY: Can I please make a comment on the complaint mechanism too? I, too, often receive complaints about the airport and often I've put them on to various people but - and usually it's speaking directly to the airline, never once have I, myself, said, "Maybe you should speak to the district chap", so that's something that - - -

35 MS GARDSENNI: Yes, I think you find a lot of passenger complaints got the airline.

MS LING: Yes.

MS GARDSENNI: And it does not go any further. Yes.

40 MR TRUDZIK: Okay, well, that sort of - I could put a few lenses on the one issue which I think is helpful. I know that Ole, you have a presentation scheduled and I don't know whether you have actually begun part of that, or whether your comments were very specifically in relation to Russell's presentation, so what I might do is just offer Russell any final comments, if you want to make them, before we close off your
45 particular session?

MR PEATE: No, just thank you for the opportunity to be here, make a presentation. We will be making a formal submission by 24 August. We will try to refer to some of

the examples where there's conflict to make that a bit easier, and ostensibly our submission will mostly, in part, reflect what we have presented today.

5 MR TRUDZIK: Okay. Thank you for your time and for your session. Now, we are running about five minutes ahead of your schedule time, Ole, now - - -

MR GARSENNI: Yes, time for a break.

10 MR TRUDZIK: Why don't we grab a cup of tea, or coffee, and we will start again at a quarter past, no, sorry, a quarter to?

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

[9.39am]

15

RESUMED

[9.45am]

20 MR TRUDZIK: Okay, we will reconvene the morning session and I would like to invite Ole Gardsenni from the Octag - - -

MR GARSENNI: No, no, no.

25 MS GARSENNI: Yes, Greater City Access.

MR TRUDZIK: Sorry?

MS GARSENNI: Greater City Access.

30 MR TRUDZIK: Greater City Access?

MS GARSENNI: Yes.

35 MR TRUDZIK: Okay, that's what the official term is; good. It would probably then help us if, as an introductory opening remark you paint the context of the organisation?

40 MR GARSENNI: My name's Ole Gardsenni. In conjunction with my wife, Tracey, we operate Greater City Access. At this point in time we are the only commercially based wheelchair access transporters this side of Murray Bridge, hence we do a lot of work not only within the City of Mount Gambier/District Council of Grant but also in other council areas.

45 Just to give you a bit of a background: about three years ago both my wife and I are in Lake City Taxis and we saw a need develop here in Mount Gambier for an efficient disability transport. At the time there was one vehicle servicing the whole of Mount Gambier Districts on a limited capacity. With that in mind we set out with the philosophy of providing a 24-hour, seven day a week service which we have achieved

in a very short space of time. In the three-year period we have gone from one vehicle to five operating seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

5 As the years progress and the aged become older we're finding that our clientele have shifted somewhat from not only just disabled people but into the area of the people that are still mobile but not quite into wheelchairs as yet and, hence, we have had to redesign our transport, or our vehicles, to cater for that ever-growing market. Hence, we have gone out and bought specialised vehicles now that will accommodate the aged people knowing full well that as it progresses down the years these aged people that are still
10 mobile in their walking frames, or their, whatever, will very soon come to a stage where they will be needing wheelchairs.

At this point in time probably 80 per cent of our work is with wheelchairs and 20 per cent of our total work is with the aged from either aged care facilities, or from private
15 residents. The problem I see, and I can wear two hats here, one as a taxi operator and one as a wheelchair operator is that, unfortunately, it is based - their income is based on a dollar - on a dollar-generated mechanism so obviously the quicker you can get a person in and the quicker you can get him out, the quicker you can get to the next job.

20 Unfortunately, with the amount of aged and disabled people here that doesn't work in a normal taxi scene. So what we're doing is, we're actually catering for the people that need more time spent on a personal one-to-one basis for these people. An example, yesterday Tracey took out one of our clients who is aged, on a walking frame, and she wanted to go shopping, so Tracey spent the time taking her, picking her up, taking her
25 out, taking her shopping and then taking her back. Now, this sort of thing can't happen with a normal taxi operation, ie, they haven't got the time to do it.

Now, Brett was saying before about Red Cross. Fine, Red Cross do it, but they have got an understanding that they are doing medical appointments and perhaps some of
30 this sort of work, but a lot of the aged don't want to use the Red Cross, or they want to be still independent so, hence, they use us. One of the biggest factors, I believe, is education. In South Australia, and I just need to sort of run down, I'm not sure whether you know of the system in South Australia? It might be very similar to the other States, but in South Australia if you qualify for Transport Subsidy Scheme vouchers there are
35 two types of Transport Subsidy Scheme vouchers.

One is a 50 per cent and the other one is 75; 75 per cent normally relates to people that are unable to transfer any longer, eg, wheelchairs. The remainder of the 50 per cent are for people that are still mobile. In recent times, I think January this year, they opened
40 up the criteria of eligibility for 50 per cent to include people that have cognitive loss, people that perhaps have hearing impairment, sight impairment so, obviously, that opens up the range.

We're finding that unless Tracey and I are fully aware of the system that the South
45 Australian Government use, namely, Transport Subsidy Scheme vouchers, that our - most of our clients are unaware of the benefits that they can tie into. I will give you a couple of examples: we have several young ladies that go to TAFE who are wheelchair-bound. Until they were notified by us, and we sort of made the inquiries,

they weren't aware that they can tap into what they call the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme, and I work very closely with Brett from Disability SA in this matter here.

5 They also weren't aware that if they are working as a disabled person they are entitled to what they call Journey to Work Scheme vouchers. What was happening previously, they were issued with a standard Transport Subsidy Scheme voucher for 75 per cent. In South Australia in March, I think, no, January this year they increased the amount of vouchers per year from 60-a half to 80-a half. They also increased the dollar value of
10 the vouchers from 30 to \$40 per voucher, which is obviously great, and that came about through many, many hours of lobbying with my local Independent Member.

So in some respects that's great but, at the same time the Government, through the agencies, are not getting that information out to the relevant clients to say, "Yes, you
15 have other benefits available to you." And what was happening that these young girls, and whoever, they were using their standard Transport Subsidy Scheme vouchers until they ran out, not knowing that they can actually tie into these other schemes to alleviate the stress on their, you know, on normal vouchers. So education is a major factor when we're looking at getting these things in.

20 At the same time, I spoke to Brett just a short time ago, we have clients with special needs. One of them is a person who's an amputee who has renal dialysis three times a week. Now, he relies on his vouchers to and from the hospital. I have been in discussion with my local member through the Office of Public Transport, or whatever
25 they want to call themselves now, saying: there is no flexibility in the way that they operate the Transport Subsidy Scheme voucher.

Everybody across the board has issued 80 vouchers every half a year at a dollar value of \$40 a voucher. Why can't people be assessed on an individual basis to find out what
30 type of voucher scheme that they need. Now, this person that I was referring to that needs to go up and have renal dialysis, could it be the fact that instead of being issued 80 vouchers at \$40 per half year why couldn't he be issued 160 at 20? Because it's not like he goes out to Penola, or out where - he is confined from home to hospital, home down the street.

35 So there is no flexibility in the system at this current point time and that would alleviate a lot of the problems with this particular fellow; or the other way we could do it is that once they run out then whose responsibility is it, the client's responsibility, or is it some other Government authority, whether it be State, or Federal to fund that sort of thing
40 - - -

MS GARDSENNI: Especially for medical reasons.

45 MR GARDSENNI: - - - particularly for medical reasons, you know, it's not like he's going down to the pub six times a week. At the end of the day these Transport Subsidy Scheme vouchers are limited to three a week; that's what it is. Actually, it works out at 3.2 a week that you can use before you run out after the six months. Now, if he's using, and under the Government scheme will require to take one voucher there and one

voucher back, so suddenly he's using six in a week without going anywhere else so, obviously, his vouchers run out in three months. The last time he ran out I actually had to beg to get a spare book for him.

5 And, look, I understand there is inherent problems with this particular person, right, but we have another occasion where we have a young lady who's severely disabled, reliant on people to do everything for her. Now, she goes out on a regular basis. She goes out to arts and crafts; she goes out to singing; she goes out to do this, and this, and this. Is it fair to say that this person can't go out because she is restricted by the amount of
10 vouchers she has. She would be another ideal candidate that if the system was flexible enough we could actually drop it from \$40 to \$20 and give her twice as many vouchers.

At this present time in Mount Gambier and, look, my wife and I we probably process 800/900 vouchers a month. In the taxis it's a little bit less, but the mean average taxi
15 voucher in Mount Gambier is \$7, right? Now, \$7, and if you understand what I mean, little Ms Joe Blogg gets off stand one, or stand two at Lakes Village and she goes home, and the total fare might be \$8, so she gives a voucher out, so she pays \$4 and the voucher is for \$4. Now, considering that the voucher value is tops at \$40 the mean average, and let's say is around about \$8, so there's a lot of money that the Government
20 is actually not forking out, right?

MS GARDSENNI: Been allocated, but not used.

MR GARDSENNI: So the Government says every year we have got how many
25 million vouchers out, times are by the \$40, if everybody used all the vouchers this young woman wouldn't have to pay, but they know that is not the case because 80 per cent of the vouchers are well below a third of the voucher value, right? So why can't there be that flexibility, and particularly in country areas, what you have to realise that in country areas such as this our disabled people rely on commercial transport because
30 public transport is just not available.

We have the city buses running around but they run on an hourly basis at set loops. You can't say to these disabled people in chairs, or whatever it is, that: you're going to have to travel 200 metres down the road to get on a bus, to wait an hour to get to there
35 and then do the same. It's just not reasonable, right? So there is no flexibility within the system at this present time and which is something which I'm always on the case with my local member.

It brings us to another matter is, perhaps there's inconsistencies in disabled transport and
40 I'm talking about the young lady at Ellard Street, right? Now, what concerns me is that she has to be reliant on our service all the time, whereas you've got a vehicle at another residential area, right, that sits there all day. What do we do? That could ease a lot of the burden on her vouchers.

45 Coming back to aged people, and it comes back to airport once again, we transport a lot of people now and we're finding that over the last 12 months the increase of aged and disabled people going to Adelaide has somewhat doubled. So getting back to what we're saying about the airports, it is a problem. Now we, as transport operators, are

finding ourselves more than transport operators down here. We're finding ourselves that we need to mediate between our clients and other transport operators.

5 We need to make sure that our clients are fully aware of what's going on. We go out of our way to assist our clients wherever possible, and it's something which we don't mind doing but it's out of the scope of the general purpose commercial operator. We have a young lady, or not a young lady, we have an elderly lady who's confined to a chair and who's main care-giver is her mother who's 20 years older. Now, obviously, this lady can't go out without her mother, or vice versa, she can't be left home. And it comes
10 back to this Transport Subsidy Scheme voucher again that she uses that many because she normally goes out two or three times a week, that at the end of the day when they run out her mother has to pay full tote odds all the time and it's costing her anywhere up to \$100 a week to go out.

15 Now, this is somebody that's on a pension, you know, living at home by themselves. So there is no other method that we can see at the moment to help these people out and, obviously, it's heartfelt for us because they want to go and we say, "Well, you've got no more vouchers you're going to have to pay full tote odds" or, "You stay home." And this is the problem. This is the one biggest problem in country areas down here is, how
20 the aged and the disabled are able to get around and show still some signs of independence without costing them a pension a week.

One of the main problems, and it might be just veering off the track a bit, is the ability to get drivers within the system down here. For you to get a clear picture what I need to
25 do is just give you a few examples: I'm a qualified certificate for Workplace Assessment Training; I'm also a qualified motor vehicle driving instructor, so I do all our group's driving instruction and assessing.

30 If a person comes off the street and wants to drive either one of my access vehicles, or one of my taxis, there is a certain regime that needs to go through. You need to get police checks, which now wait anywhere up to nine weeks to get a police check through. You need to get a medical. You need to do a long distance learning package to get the temporary accreditation. You need to then do log book training. You need to then do the review, right? All up it's \$650 to get an accreditation. Doesn't sound too
35 bad? You then, if you had an articulated motor vehicle licence, namely, assembly licence, you could go straight into the Motor Vehicles Department, apply for a large passenger accreditation, get it straight away with no questions asked and go straight in and drive a 40-seater bus.

40 So there is that inconsistency down here and in the country areas generally of how we're going to get our drivers, and how difficult it is to get our drivers. An example, last Saturday - last Friday night we had four vehicles sitting off the road, we can't find drivers. Oh, we can find drivers but we just can't - unless we end up paying the \$650 to get a driver. My question is, why is it that consistency and why is that there are only
45 two groups in Adelaide which are tied in to the Office of Public Transport that can supply these sort of services, right?

I've been trying for quite a few years now to try to get an accreditation to do the training but obviously I'm not good enough to do it. So we have a problem. Because we can't get enough drivers we can't put the cars on the road. If we can't put the cars on the road then our customers wait. That extends the response time to the aged, to everybody else.
5 So it is a big problem, yes.

Now, having read between the lines and such, I believe there might be a change to the regional hospital. Mount Gambier is going to become a regional hospital, I believe, eventually somewhere down the track and I believe, and I might be wrong, but the
10 outlying hospitals might be reduced to perhaps palliative, or respite centre. So if that's the case we then have to think, if that's the case where are the people going to come back for treatment? They're going to come back to Mount Gambier. So we as operators need to gear up for that, because we're going to get this - example, my wife took a lady to Hamilton on this Saturday because she can't get in to see a specialist
15 here.

Now, this lady had to pay full tote obviously to go to Hamilton and back. Although she can claim a portion on PAT's she still has to pay full up. So in Adelaide it's different. In Adelaide it's different because you have got the infrastructure of public transport and
20 such. Here, you haven't, you're reliant on a certain amount of vehicles to do 100 per cent of the work. And that's about - that's about it. Only I could say I'm very passionate about my disabled transport, I really am.

MR TRUDZIK: I think that is coming through, Ole, and also it's been a good, I guess,
25 list of key issues. Could I - a couple of things come back to, and this relates to the conversation in the previous session about your providing assistance for disabled persons at the airport; is that something that all taxi drivers do?

MR GARDSENNI: No.
30

MS GARDSENNI: Your normal taxi driver would not do too much at all. Basically, he's got your money, pop them out of the car. We don't do that. We make sure our clients get in to where they're supposed to go. That's the way we run our business.

MR GARDSENNI: You see, don't forget we perhaps - we're getting into a different clientele base. We're dealing with the aged, and I'm talking about the aged and also the disabled. We would be amiss in our duty of care to drop somebody off in a wheelchair and say, "Well, thank you very much." We have to, a lot of the times, take their medical records, all their stuff. You know, it's nothing - I've seen Tracey feed a lady
40 who was that crook, through her tube in her stomach because she couldn't do it after a plane trip. You know, this is the extent of - - -

MS GARDSENNI: You have a lot of the nursing facilities and aged care facilities actually ring me and say, "When you take this person can you go through admissions and take them down to surgical ward?" Now, you wouldn't have a normal taxi driver do that, and because some of these people may have dementia, and whatever else, you actually have to go through this - the whole process to get these people to where they

have to go. Well, that's just a part of our service, we make sure that your client gets to where they're going in the best capable way.

5 MR GARDSENNI: And getting back to the airport structure, yes, we'll pick them up from, say, the aged care facility; we normally get all their medical records; we make sure that they're on their plane and we know what time they're on their plane and we normally get there if they're in a chair; if they have got a companion, or a carer, we would normally assist to transfer into what we call the "plane chair", and a lot of times if they can't transfer from the plane chair off the lift into the plane, I have to do it with
10 them. Because we have had the occasions where the airline staff won't do it.

MS GARDSENNI: They won't do it.

15 MR GARDSENNI: They won't do it. It's, "Sorry, buddy, it's not my job."

MS LING: Could I just reinforce what Ole's saying? I think that your service works very well with disability - and I think it was a couple of weeks ago on a Sunday night at half past nine, you took one of our clients back to their house from the bus and the person that was on roster failed to come on roster on time to let the person in the house,
20 and you rang me - - -

MS GARDSENNI: Yes.

25 MS LING: - - - and we were able to activate - we were called straight away. Now, that person would have been left out in the cold for how long, I don't know, if we hadn't have received that phone call, I mean, that's how good your service is.

30 MR GARDSENNI: And that's what we do. We have got a philosophy, and it is in and out in our standing operating procedures that anybody with a disability, whichever way, will not be left alone unless there is a key giver available, or somebody that we can hand the person to, otherwise stays with the driver until such time that we can organise an emergency service, right? And that's the way we look at it.

35 MR TRUDZIK: Ole, you also mentioned that you were often playing the role of the information broker, or adviser about rights and entitlements. Can you suggest any - that is presumably because you're in contact, I guess, at a practical level where those entitlements need to be exercised, or not? Can you point, or suggest other ways that information could be getting to the people you deal with.

40 MS GARDSENNI: Well, couldn't the SATSS people actually contact all aged care facilities, perhaps all, like, special school care people and all those that work at those places saying, "These are the people and this is the criteria for them to go on vouchers."

45 MR GARDSENNI: Let us not forget too that we're talking - when we're talking SATSS, the South Australia Transport Subsidy Scheme, you're actually talking two areas. Don't forget, when we send our SATSS vouchers in and we ring the SATSS voucher people up and say, "Listen, can I order another book?" and all the rest of it, don't forget that's actually - we're actually ringing Suburban Taxis, because the

Government, in their wisdom, have out-sourced the processing and the collating and the information services for all these books to a private enterprise.

5 So when you ring them up - and they get paid three cents per SATSS voucher for that process. So when I ring them up and say, "Listen, can I order another book for Joe Bloggs?" - "Yes, no worries", I know I'm actually ringing Suburban Taxis, right? Then what happens, once they have processed all the SATSS vouchers then it goes to the Government department, right, and the Government department says, "Yes, that's okay", and then they write a cheque out and they send it back to me. So we're actually
10 not talking to the Government department when we're ringing up, we're actually talking to a private enterprise, right, and private enterprise, I know, wouldn't be interested in sending that information out because they say, "Hold on, we're only here to process it. We're not here to supply all the information." And it has to come from the Government department not the processor.

15 MR BARNEY: Just in relation to your question, could I please make an interjection of a response? When you're talking about SATSS vouchers we're also talking about Journey to Work vouchers and Tertiary Assistance vouchers, I would think that the TAFE Higher Education should be responsible, or partly responsible for putting the
20 message out.

MR GARSENNI: I agree with you.

25 MR BARNEY: Work places that hire people who have a disability - - -

MS GARSENNI: Here's where it comes down to education.

30 MR BARNEY: - - - should carry some of the responsibility of making it known and the more social services, I mean, we're involved with that already - being a more - - -

MR GARSENNI: I understand, and I - - -

MR BARNEY: - - - across the board out there option for people.

35 MR GARSENNI: And you know that we talk quite often about these services, right? But that's only one department, right, and there are many, many myriads of other departments and organisations out there which don't know. Lizzie and Marlene, they're now on SATSS vouchers, right; we have been pushing that for years, right? Now, have
40 a look how many more in that situation there should be placed on, right? Why not, you know? And if they're there and they can access it then that gives them another venue just in case.

MS LING: That's right. It makes them more independent.

45 MR GARSENNI: That's right. So to answer your question, I believe education is the main factor to get the information out to the general public, right, and to the ones that need these services.

MR TRUDZIK: Thank you for that. Probably the last area that I would like to discuss a bit further and this relates to some of the questions that we did ask in the issues - or we have raised in the issues paper, and that is, I guess, the completeness of the experience and in terms of what you have discussed with us this morning you may have
5 some valuable sort of experiences, or contributions to make, but one of the questions that we're keen to assess the current Standards against is the comparability issue, are they covering sufficiently comprehensively the experience of disabled people travelling?

10 MR GARSENNI: Well, I do think we are doing that - we are doing that, because we are providing a service that they know that it is safe, is sufficient, is relatively cheap and it's accessible and any time of the day - no daily - so, yes, I believe in this area here we actually are compliant to all the critiques that the disabled people need at this stage.
15 And we have got the selection of vehicles to do it. We can take one person, we can take a family of seven plus a chair. So what we have done is, we have varied the amount of transport and types of vehicles to cater for all sorts, and it's cost us a lot of money to do that, but we enjoy doing it.

MR TRUDZIK: I am looking at what happens before you pick them up and after you drop them off and the airport examples may be one of an area where you have to
20 continue to help to make the experience complete. Are there any other examples where you see, before you get them and after you deliver them to their destination, the experience isn't complete?

25 MR GARSENNI: It happens all the time. We will pick up somebody for an appointment and let us say an aged care facility, we will go to the aged care facility; we will make sure that they're ready. If it's a day like today, we know the client, we make sure that they're dressed appropriately, right; is there any paperwork to go; is there any
30 medical records to go, "Yes", this - we take the medical records. "Right, what time's the appointment? Where's the appointment?" Let's say at the Eye Centre. We know where the Eye Centre is. We take them down to the Eye Centre, we take - unload them, we take them in, information is given making sure that the right information is given; we then leave them and then they ring us up, we do the reverse trip. So it's more than just picking them up at the door and dropping them at the door. Our service provides that
35 extra on the side from start to woe, and that happens in 100 per cent of our cases.

MR TRUDZIK: It seems like you, in the examples that you have cited, that you have extended the experience either side of what other operators might normally do?

40 MR GARSENNI: But don't forget, this is Mount Gambier, this is not - I'm not talking about any other area, I'm talking about my home town and I classify my clients, or our clients, as our extended family and I will treat them as my extended family and that's the difference in, perhaps, what we do down here and what Adelaide does, and then operators in that way.
45

MS GARSENNI: It's the same as taking your client into a house. Now, if you leave it to a family member who doesn't know how to use a wheelchair they're going to try and go the wrong way your client will fall out of the chair because they don't know how

to do it. They don't realise about shifting paths and trying to get through things. You have to also educate the family that you're taking them to because they don't know how to get them up and down little steps, big steps, or what else so, I mean, we also do that.

5 MR GARDSENNI: The example yesterday, I've got a lady who's got a very, very sore hip and she's on a walking frame, one with the wheels on it. Now, I've had to sit down there for probably 20 minutes yesterday and explain to her how a walking frame actually operates, right, because she was having it out in front all the time and she was actually chasing the walking frame. So she's been given this walking frame with no
10 assistance on how to use it, how to use the brakes, to stop it going downhill and all the rest of it.

We then act as an information centre, right, and a training centre sometimes for some of these aged people, and that's part of our service. At the same time I'm also studying a
15 certificate for the Disability Services and Tracey's doing a certificate III in aged care which then gives us a further insight into our business.

MR TRUDZIK: So you're using the Vocational Education Training System very strongly. Look, the other sort of more general question is about, and it's something that
20 the review is obviously very keen to assess the impact of the Standards, have they made a difference? So a lot of what we have discussed is what the, I guess, what should be provided. We would also like to get some, I guess, any of your views on the impact that the Standards, since they have been introduced, have had?

25 MR GARDSENNI: It's brought people with disabilities hopefully on the same level as able-bodied people, to give them the ability to be more independent than they would have previously. And discrimination is, obviously, a big factor in any society and what we're trying to do down here is show these people that they don't need to be
30 discriminated against because they have got any - and I mean not just wheelchairs but of any sort of discriminative. And I think we have done that. We have done that with our service.

MR TRUDZIK: Have the Standards clarified your obligations as an operator?

35 MR GARDSENNI: Yes, it has; it has. I know what I need to do under these Standards, right, and I'm making sure that we don't breach any of the Standards.

MR TRUDZIK: Can you make comment on how aware you think other operators are of the Standards?

40 MR GARDSENNI: That's a bit hard to say in the disability side because we're the only ones here doing it, right, but on occasions where I've had to send clients to Adelaide it comes down to it again. I've got my own referrals to people with Disabled Transport in Adelaide and I'll only use those, so if I know that I've got a client that's travelling to
45 Adelaide via plane, or via bus, as an operator down here I will actually contact my sources in Adelaide and say, "Listen, well, I've Joe Bloggs coming to Adelaide, I want you to meet him at the plane at such-and-such a time, such-and-such a bus, look after him", right?

And it's a reciprocal arrangement, right, but I'm very aware that if I just rang up, let's say the Access mob in Adelaide and say, "Listen, I've got such-and-such coming up", there's a 90 per cent possibility either they're going to be late, or they're going to miss him, right. And it comes down to my duty of care, again, as an operator on this side
5 making sure that their experience, and their travel is complete even though they have left my care.

MR TRUDZIK: Have you found any of the Standards, or have any of the Standards
10 proven to be impractical, or difficult for you to comply with?

MR GARSDENNI: We might not comply with 100 per cent of the time but at the end of the day I think commonsense and the area that you're working with sometimes just have to take precedent, you know. And that might be the case where we have people in perhaps in long beds, you know, we might load them wrong but we load them for their
15 own comfort too, you know, and safety, you know. We might not perhaps comply all-up with OH and S safety rules but sometimes you just can't help it, you know, but we do our best.

MR TRUDZIK: Okay, well, I think they're all the questions that I have. Tanuja,
20 you're okay? I appreciate Tracey and Ole your time in speaking to the review and can we expect a written submission?

MS GARSDENNI: Yes, we will.

MR TRUDZIK: Well, we look forward to receiving that, and you keeping up the good
25 work.

MR GARSDENNI: Oh, mate, it's not work, it's a lifestyle and we love the lifestyle and we love our people, and this is Mount Gambier, this is our home town, our kids have
30 been brought up here, we have been brought up here and we love the town and we love our people, and it's more than just the job. I've been in plenty of jobs in my life-time and this is one I really love.

MR TRUDZIK: So any further comments? Brett, did you want to make any further
35 comment?

MR BARNEY: I would like to comment on some of those submissions. I guess - I have been making notes of what I might put forward when my time comes but just in regards to one comment, one strain you were looking at there about completeness of
40 service. If you're looking at a whole of Government approach and of Disability Standards as the way to align the whole of Government approach, to better support the implementation of SATSS vouchers would be more efficient than chopping it up with other inefficient means. And what I mean by that is, for example, the SATSS vouchers book has run out and while those vouchers were being used you were going in making
45 sure the person was ready, taking him there, taking them somewhere and making sure they were safe and secure.

When those vouchers run out their choices are to stay home, or we broker someone for three hours at \$25 an hour to go in and do that, drive them there, stick around, pick them up. You know, we're looking at a whole of Government approach to make the SATSS vouchers more accessible and more useable. It's a saving and our clients get out of their home, so - - -

MR GARSENENI: And that's the philosophy we have tried to say to people is, just because you're in a chair it doesn't mean you have to sit home. You have got the ability through the SATSS voucher scheme to get out, and we encourage families to get their people out of aged care facilities, or whatever, on a weekly basis. We talk at length to the relatives and say, "Listen, it's not hard. It's not hard for us to pick up mum, or dad, or aunty and take her home."

MS GARSENENI: Well, that's another thing too, is, I mean, you have a lot of people that go to the aged care where their mum or dad is and they - unless they - sometimes it is unless they see us they get mum out of the wheelchair, try and get her into the car, fold the wheelchair, throw it in the boot and try and get to where they are. So, I mean, it comes back to also - we also have to get to some of the families to let them know that we're here too.

And once they realise how easy it is they just don't look back, because a lot of people still, as families, don't realise - I think sometimes too, they like to think that they are still doing the care for mum and dad and don't - you know, even though it's hard on mum and dad to get out of the chair and try and get them into the car and do that, some families, you know, think it's, "Well, I'm not doing the proper care", but once they do it once and they realise how easy it really is then there's a change in the families.

And I have noticed that with a lot of the ones there, it's just a matter of trying to get to these families as well but it could be very busy and the matter of trying to get people who have to be put through the course to actually get the licence to drive, which takes ever so long and is expensive, it's very hard for us to then get the time to go out and see the families and explain what, and how easy it can be. So it comes back down to that again to try and help them.

MR GARSENENI: I will just give you on an average, my wife and I work seven days a week; between us we would do 180 hours a week, every week. We don't have days off because we - - -

MS GARSENENI: Even Christmas - Christmas Day would be our busiest day. We do not stop. We start at 7 in the morning and we would not stop till 9.30 at night and that's with three vehicles all day. So our Christmas Day isn't spend with our family.

MR GARSENENI: All I've got to say is, what used to happen before?

MR BARNEY: I guess in response to what used to happen before, I can compare it to another region where I'm working - I'm currently working on trying to get some changes and if I refer to the Wagga Range Council, there are - I'm trying to get some numbers right now from DTEI, IE, regarding the specific numbers of SATSS vouchers

in the Wagga Range, but people don't have SATSS vouchers, or Tertiary vouchers in the Wagga Range because they have got no way to use those vouchers because there's no accessible vehicles for them to use. So you have got a whole range of population entitled to a service, a way to get out of their homes, a way to access social services and
5 they can't actually hand those vouchers to anyone. So, I guess, I'm working with the Wagga Range about trying to develop further integrated transport and - - -

MR GARDSENNI: Yes, and that's where we come in too because we're quite happy to supply that transport and work out in a further field.
10

MR BARNEY: And that's in the pipeline.

MR GARDSENNI: It is.

15 MR BARNEY: But it's a way of looking at what isn't happening and what should be happening and what is happening.

MS LING: But to answer what was happening before is, we were actually brokering - the guidelines have changed now, we can't broker for transport, but in the old days we
20 were actually able to broker to provide people with transport services. So like Brett was saying, you would pay for someone to go and do a transport - transporting a client, whether it be in their car, or in a specific car, three hours turn-around at a huge cost to provide exactly the same thing that you're paying.

25 MR BARNEY: Yes.

MS LING: And these people did have vouchers but they couldn't use them.

30 MS GARDSENNI: Yes.

MR TRUDZIK: Okay, well, I think that brings to an end the formal sessions that we have registered. Brett, have you had an opportunity to say all that you wanted to say?

35 MR BARNEY: Oh, there were a few more things actually - - -

MR TRUDZIK: So you want a sort of a formal session allocated to you, which we can
- - -

40 MR BARNEY: I think I would prefer to wait till you put anything forward if you were going to.

MR HUMPHRIES: I'm not providing evidence today.

45 MR BARNEY: All right. Well then, I am happy to - - -

MR TRUDZIK: Okay, now, are you happy to go straight into it, or would people like a cup of tea?

MR BARNEY: I've got just a few dot points.

MR TRUDZIK: Okay, well, let's keep going, so over to you, Brett.

5 MR BARNEY: Okay. My name's Brett Barney and I work for Disability SA. I'm
involved in transport, I guess vicariously in the sense of the case management accent of
working with clients and trying to come up with solutions but also work - I see a lot of
people on the south - correct me if I get the name wrong but the South-East Integrated
Transport Community; is that what's it's termed?

10

MR HUMPHRIES: Oh, that will do.

MR BARNEY: As well as the City Bus Service Advisory Committee, and I think I got
that one right. But as well as just trying to facilitate some consumer involvement with
15 those committees as well. But there's a few issues that keep coming up and we deal
with a lot of them on an ad hoc basis, I guess, and we come up with solutions but some
things are ongoing. And one is about equality of access between metro and country.
It's a big issue in terms of public transport in that, let's look at the Plus One Companion
card, for example. I'm not sure whether people are familiar with the Plus One
20 Companion card?

When you apply for SATSS vouchers on the one form in South Australia you can apply
for a SATSS voucher and a Plus One Companion card. The Plus One Companion card
gives you a voucher to ride public transport as a carer for free in the city. And in the
25 metro it's funded by the Government for that person to present it, they mark it and they
get compensated. In Mount Gambier the City Bus Service, we have an individual
agreement, I guess, just negotiated in the sense where Brian McCormack, for example,
runs the City Bus Service, or is contracted to run the City Bus Service, he is supportive
of carers assisting people riding public transport, but it's not a funded solution as it is in
30 metro, so there isn't an equality there.

The City Bus Service is flexible but it's bound by dollars in the sense that we sit down
once every three months, I think, and we come up with - we deal with problems, we
come up with solutions and we negotiate and make things work. And in the interim I
35 will ring up Brian and just say, "We've got this situation, what can we do." And a lot of
times we can come up with a solution but more often they're stuffed because they're
bound by money in the sense that they can't be endlessly funded to just keep expanding
and making detours and things like that, so while access is one thing the money to
provide that access fairly is another, I guess. Would that be a fair comment?

40

I mentioned the SATSS vouchers in the Wagga Range already just in the sense that,
correct me if I'm wrong, but the taxi service in the Wagga Range isn't able to accept
those vouchers because of the way they are classified.

45 MR GARSDENNI: I believe actually that's the case and it's - unless you actually apply
to the SATSS mob to accept vouchers then you can't accept vouchers. You need an
agreement, a contract.

MS GARDSENNI: Between them and yourself to have that.

MR BARNEY: So I guess further to - I'm talking about Wagga Range because I'm in the process of negotiating some integrated transport, better integrated transport
5 solutions right now as a result of these Regional Integrated Transport Committees, but an example of the difficulties faced by regional areas is that if you wanted to attend an MS support group, for example, in Mount Gambier and there wasn't a Red Cross vehicle available and you didn't have - your level of disability wasn't such that you got a voucher that was adequate for you to get from Millicent to Mount Gambier, the only
10 option you would have to attend that group might be to hop on a State Liner bus, come to Mount Gambier, stay overnight and then catch the bus back the next day. There isn't any other alternatives, which is - - -

MR GARDSENNI: Well, the other alternative is to catch a taxi and it would cost you
15 a hundred bucks each way.

MR BARNEY: That's right.

MS LING: That's right.
20

MR BARNEY: So that's one example, but I think it's a very good example of 50 kilometres in the metro area would mean next to nothing, it might be a two - two-zone pass, or something like that, but it's a major operation in this area, so; that also applies to people who might sit just outside of the City Bus Service zone, or a brokered service.
25 Two kilometres outside of the zone might mean an extra hundred. I'm aware of a case in Millicent where two kilometres outside of the zone means an extra \$110 that they had to fork out each work so it can make a significant difference.

I touched on the completeness of service before and you also, I think you touched on
30 the fact that we are looking at the potential, or it's more than a potential, it's looking like it might be given, of the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure supporting transport providers to bring people to this regional centre to attend specialist appointments rather than take specialists out to the regional areas, and that's - speaking to the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure last week they have put a
35 time-frame of two years on that. And that's a, I guess, a broad-reaching transport solution, a public transport solution.

The antics of it I'm not sold on but it's still a solution, but it could - if that same solution was extended to within our city centre some of the examples you put forward before
40 about people having felt issues, running out of SATSS vouchers and not being near a bus and not having any other options, if there's a health issue I think that's something that should be considered by the public transport providers and perhaps built into the Disability Standards. I think that making necessary appointments part of what needs to be catered for. Does that make sense?
45

MR GARDSENNI: Yes.

MR BARNEY: And I think when you were questioning Ole before about how the Standards have changed the way you operate, I guess I've seen the Standards as a platform for people with a disability to stand on and further negotiate because - and I say "further negotiate" because Standards typically are just about never completely met
5 they're just used as something to negotiate towards.

MR GARSENNI: That's right.

MR BARNEY: And I think raising the Standards gives people further opportunity to
10 negotiate, so - - -

MR TRUDZIK: That's it?

MR BARNEY: I think that's it.
15

MR TRUDZIK: All right. Well, I think that's sort of come back and summarised a number of the points that we had discussed earlier so they're good; thank you for those comments. I don't have any - I don't think they raised any particular questions in my mind. Maybe the only one was this sort of including appointments in the Standards.
20 Any sort of practical suggestions about how that might be able to be achieved?

MR BARNEY: Well, I think using that specific example that Ole raised before, you have got someone who has vouchers which they should really, you know, in terms of public transport they have as much right to use that voucher to go to the hospital as they
25 have to choose to go to the pub, to be honest. It's up to them to choose, but when they're required by a doctor to go to a hospital three times a week and use six vouchers a week and they only get a specific number a year, every six months, their other choices are diminished. I guess it's about if something's essential maybe it's terming what's essential, what public transport needs to essentially provide for.
30

MR GARSENNI: Yes.

MR BARNEY: In a Standard it was put forward that public transport must provide, you know, flexible options to get people to medical appointments, or social services.
35

MR TRUDZIK: It sort of raises the notion of discretionary and essential, or at least recognition of the difference between essential and discretionary. Okay, well, look, thank you, Brett, for those comments. With that I'll thank everybody for their contributions today and I formally close the public hearing, so thank you for your time.
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HEARING CONCLUDED

[10.42am]