TRAVELLERSaid

99th ANNUAL REPORT

2014–2015

TRAVELLERSaid

Our Vision

For travellers at the point of need to have easy access to services which are relevant and assist in providing solutions with dignity.

Our Mission

To assist travellers at their point of need, and to ensure that they reach their destination safely and confidently.

Our Values

Accountability, compassion, integrity, leadership and teamwork: these are the attributes we prize over all others. We believe in displaying these values at all times to users of our services, our clients, our members, stakeholders, staff and volunteers.

Our Purpose

To provide support, advice and assistance at the point of need to the travelling public with special requirements and to those in emergency situations.

99TH ANNUAL REPORT 2014–2015

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This year we have realised many of the benefits from our previous year's efforts to reduce costs, increase our untagged funding revenue and to make our operations more efficient.

I know that the Board shares the same joy as I do when I say how happy we were with this year's financial results and the consistent level of service performance and the extraordinary satisfaction of our clients (despite the fact many of them are in difficult situations).

2016 is the year we celebrate 100 years of service to the community and a year in which we are on a mission for greater financial security and sustainability. I look forward to sharing some of the amazing stories of people and families we've helped over the decade since 1916.

We are all sad to have lost a significant amount of funding for the Emergency Relief service but are committed to finding ways to get this service back to its full state. Despite not being able to operate at full speed it is comforting to know that we are still able to provide some incredibly important assistance in times of crisis.

We are very pleased with the success of our other services and also with the upward trend in usage. We will continue to analyse our suite of services to ensure we are in step with community needs.

The board and management team of TAA have put together a strategic plan for the next two years, which is based on keeping the organisation strong, relevant and sustainable. The strategy is focussed on developing stronger partnerships, particularly with transport providers, driving greater returns in fundraising and managing our operations for maximum efficiency.

We are fortunate to have a super team of staff and volunteers who keep our organisation delivering outstanding results seven days a week, 365 days a year.

We make Melbourne more liveable and have improved the daily life of thousands of Victorians this year. A great achievement TAA!

Lisa Bowman
President

CEO REPORT

What an amazing year 2014-15 has been. We set ourselves some significant objectives and targets as part of our business plan for the year and it has been wonderful to look back over the last year and reflect on the achievements of our volunteers, staff, management team and the Board.

Our service outputs continued to grow with an overall increase of 5% from 225,000 instances of service in 2013-14 to over 236,000 in 2014-15. The increase in our ageing population and greater independence among people with a disability continues to drive demand for Travellers Aid Australia's (TAA) unique service offering.

We successfully collaborated with V/line and Community Accessability Inc. to launch a Buggy and Personal Guidance service at Seymour Railway Station in November 2014. More than 1300 instances of assistance were provided as at 30 June 2015 and usage continues to rise.

Our fundraising efforts yielded strong results and we experienced success and growth in all areas of fundraising, particularly trust and foundation submissions. Our efforts to attract corporate support and sponsorship were also successful with the granting of a two year corporate partnership with RACV to deliver Community Travel Training information sessions across Victoria and support the growth of the Medical Companion Service.

We remain committed to ensuring financial rigour across the organisation. During 2014-15 an independent review of TAA's finance, accounting systems and processes was completed which resulted in the outsourcing of this function to an external provider and the upgrading of our accounting system. This has resulted in efficiency gains as well as better access to financial information for all levels of management. A significant effort has also been made to up-skill middle level management in financial literacy contributing to a greater appreciation for the need to accurately forecast and manage operational revenue and expense.

Looking ahead TAA will continue to review its internal systems to create efficiencies and better operating systems of work. A key activity underway is to upgrade our IT system to better understand and communicate with our donors and supporters.

We acknowledge challenges continue to exist in the sector and are focused on creating enduring partnerships to increase our ability to increase capacity, reduce operating costs and place the organisation in a strong and viable position as we approach the celebration of TAA's 100th year of operation in 2016.

Finally, I would like to thank and acknowledge the contribution and efforts of all our dedicated volunteers, staff, management team and Board members who have ensured that TAA continues to provide a valued service.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all our funders, stakeholders and donors for their ongoing support of our work. I look forward to another great year working together.

Elias Lebbos
CEO

TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial information presented in this Annual Report has been derived from the audited Financial Statements of Travellers Aid Australia for the year ending 30 June 2015.

A copy of the full financial report is available on request.

For the year ended 30 June 2015 Travellers Aid Australia achieved an operating surplus of $382,260 compared with an operating deficit in the prior year of $98,371. This very pleasing result was underpinned by a 13% growth in revenue and expenses which were 13% below 2013-14.

Revenue from continuing operations totalled $1,921,277 and included significant growth in revenue gained from Trusts and Foundations ($251k up from $171k in 2013-14). It should be noted that funding of $125,589 received in 2014-15 is earmarked for projects for which expenditure will be incurred in 2015-16.

The cost of operations expenses totalled $1,552,245 and continued to be tightly controlled ending the year 10% below budget reflecting a reduction in overhead and administrative costs resulting from the new organizational structure.

The organisation's cash position at year end was $661,055 compared with $277,646 for the prior year.

The outsourcing of the organisation's finance function has led to efficiency gains and the recent upgrading of the accounting system will provide management and the Board with much improved financial reporting.

Travellers Aid Australia wishes to acknowledge the committed and generous support of Federal, State and Local Government who last year provided 56% of operational funding. We also place on record our sincere thanks to the many philanthropic trusts, organisations and individuals who provided financial support for our essential work.

The staff and volunteers of Travellers Aid Australia have continued to provide excellent service and support to the travelling public in their time of need and we thank them for their commitment and dedication.

Finally I wish to thank the members of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for their contributions and support over the past year.

Denise Orchard
Treasurer

Income	2014- 2015		2013-2014	
	$	%	$	%
Government Service Grants	1,070,667	56%	1,013,842	60%
Corporate Service Grants & Sponsorship	463,391	24%	340,374	20%
Philanthropic Trusts & Foundations	121,000	6%	85,000	5%
Donations	93, 435	5%	95,592	6%
Trading Activities	114,676	6%	91,218	6%
ER Receipts	18,887	1%	39,196	2%
Other Income	39,221	2%	21,578	1%
Total Income	**1,921,277**	**100**	**1,686,800**	**100**

Expenses	2014- 2015		2013-2014	
	$	%	$	%
Employee benefits expense	1,177,394	77	1,379,921	77
Depreciation and amortisation expense	17,953	1	24,054	1
Emergency relief expense	43,489	3	94,598	5
Occupancy expenses	25,596	2	43,962	3
Administrative expenses	16,477	1	33,420	2
Consulting fees	37,065	3	0	0
Other expenses from ordinary operation	221,043	13	209,215	12
Total Expenses	**1,539,017**	**100**	**1,785,170**	**100**

TRAVELLERS AID BOARD MEMBERS

Lisa Bowman

Qualifications
B. Arts, GAICD

Experience
Lisa joined the Board of Travellers Aid Australia in October 2010. She is currently the Director of Raven Communication, a communication company specialising in providing communication, consultation and stakeholder engagement services throughout Australia.

Lisa is a Williamson Community Graduate (2007) and undertakes a range of pro bono work in the Victorian prisons.

Special responsibilities
President; Member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.

Trevor Huggard AM

Qualifications
Dip. C.E. M.I.E. (Aust), J.P

Experience
Trevor joined the Board of Travellers Aid Australia in October 1991. He is Managing Director of Finmay Pty Ltd and Principal of Trevor Huggard and Associates, Consulting Engineers.

Trevor is a former Lord Mayor of Melbourne and Councillor for ten years.

Special responsibilities
Vice President; Convenor of the People and Services Committee

Denise Orchard

Qualifications
Grad Dip B.S.RMIT, CPA

Experience
Denise joined the Board of Travellers Aid Australia in June 2005 and has held the position of Honorary Treasurer since April 2008. Denise has extensive experience across sales, marketing, financial management, business development, and multi site management in both the private and public sectors.

After retiring from Tabcorp Holdings Ltd., Denise established a gallery that promotes Australian contemporary glass art and is a Director of The Australian Association of Glass Artists Ltd (Ausglass).

Special responsibilities
Honorary Treasurer; Convenor of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

Richard Stone OAM, KSG

Qualifications
MAICD, FFin

Experience
Richard joined the Board of Travellers Aid Australia in 2010. He is presently retained by Effective Governance Pty Ltd as a Senior Advisor. Previously from 1994 to 2011 he had been an Associate Director in KPMG's Board Advisory Service. He is an experienced not for profit Director –
2000 to 2007: Australian Red Cross, National Board Member
2004 to present: CatholicCare Melbourne, Board Member.
2007 to present: Victoria Police Mentoring Program, Steering Committee Member.
2007 to present: St. Vincent's Health, Clinical Ethics Committee Member.

Special responsibilities
Member of the People and Services Committee; Convenor of the Fundraising Committee

Bev Excell

Appointed 23 October 2014
Qualifications
B.SC(Hons), FAICD

Experience
Bev joined the Board of Travellers Aid Australia in October 2014 and has been a member of the People and Services committee since January 2014. Bev was formerly a senior executive at BP Australia, working in Australia, NZ and Europe. She is the Principal of her own business Excell By Name P/L.

Bev is an experienced non executive director: from 2000-2009 on the BP Employees Credit Union then Big Sky Credit Union, from 2006-2009 on the Australasian Lubricants Manufacturing Company and now on two other not for profit boards Virtual Enterprise Australia and the Australasian Association of Philosophy. Additionally, she is an independent member of the Audit committees for four local councils.

Special responsibilities
Member of the People and Services Committee

Peter Gluskie

Appointed 23 October 2014
Qualifications
BEng MBA CPPD

Experience
Peter joined the Board in October 2014. He is the Director and Principal of Eagle Advantage Pty Ltd, a boutique strategy delivery consultancy.

Peter has wide ranging experience in implementing major business transformation programs.

Special responsibilities
Member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee. Fundraising Commitee.

Paddy Oliver

Appointed 23 October 2014
Qualifications
LL.B., M.Litt., M.B.A., GAICD

Experience
Paddy jointed the Board of Travellers Aid in October 2014. He is Managing Director of Lexcel Consulting, a management consultancy focussing on governance, risk and compliance in the financial services and professional services sectors. Paddy is a solicitor by qualification.

Special responsibilities
Member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

OUR SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE

Transport-related Emergency Relief

Overview

Many people do not realise the value of freely moving from one place to another until they are in a crisis, physical or emotional, and do not have the means to travel freely. TAA's Emergency Relief program helps people get on their way if they are in a crisis situation, do not have sufficient money and need to re-unite with family, reach a place of support or access other services. The service helps by providing subsidised travel tickets for people to return home, attend medical appointments, court hearings, funerals or to leave dangerous situations and abuse. TAA also provides complementary services such as phone cards, free access to public internet and subsidised use of shower facilities.

Our Performance

2014-2015 has been a challenging year for the Emergency Relief program. Unfortunately we were not successful in an application to the Department of Social Services for continued program funding which resulted in a major cut-back of the program from March 2015 and assistance being restricted to within Victoria. Establishing a secure funding source into the future remains a challenge.

Despite the cut in funding, 12,140 Emergency Relief services were provided to 4,032 people. This is a decrease of 20% in services delivered compared to last year.

TAA will continue to advocate for re-instatement of the Emergency Relief funding as well as explore alternative funding options and will continue to be represented on the Committee of Management of Emergency Relief Victoria.

Statistics

- One third of travel assistance provided was for travel within metropolitan Melbourne
- Young males between the age of 26 to 35 years old make up more than a quarter of all clients and are the most frequent client group
- The average number of services per client in 2014-2015 was three
- There has been a steady increase over the past five years which is an indication of increased complexity and needs:
  - 2.3 services per client in 2010-2011
  - 2.36 services per client in 2011-2012
  - 2.6 services per client in 2012-2013
  - 2.98 services per client in 2013-2014

Case Study – Easing the financial burden for Anthony

Anthony was going through a tough time. Shortly after his wife passed away from cancer, the youngest of their children, three year-old Joshua, was diagnosed with a severe medical condition and was admitted to the Royal Children's Hospital.

Anthony split his time between the hospital with Joshua and rushing back home to Geelong to look after his older daughter. Although Anthony had support from his mum the situation remained an emotional, logistical and financial challenge for him.

Anthony had already reduced his working hours to look after his wife and children but now had to stop work altogether to care for his family and had to apply for Centrelink benefits.

Travelling between the family home in Geelong and the hospital in Melbourne on a regular basis added to Anthony's expenses. When Anthony mentioned this to the social worker at the hospital, she suggested Anthony contact Travellers Aid for assistance with train fares between Geelong and Melbourne. Travellers Aid was able to provide Anthony with a number of tickets thus relieving some of the pressure Anthony was experiencing.

Pathways to Education

Overview

Since 2004, we have assisted a huge number of students with tickets to attend school through our Pathways to Education program. Our focus is on secondary school students who have disengaged from mainstream education and are at risk of disengaging from education altogether. Many of these students attend education in an alternative setting that caters better for their individual needs such as community schools which are often located in remote or distant areas. It is also common that these students come from families with a high level of dysfunction and financial challenges. By providing the students with subsidised half-yearly and yearly student travel passes, TAA enable them to attend school on a regular basis without risking transport fines for fare evasion. This provides an opportunity to complete their education and improve their employment prospects, thus enabling them to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Our Performance

In 2014-2015 we provided 47 students with 10 myki top-ups and 37 yearly student travel passes. The total cost of tickets was $20,381.

The demand for the program remains high and obtaining sufficient funds to run the program and provide assistance remains a challenge.

We started a project with Caulfield Park Community School to encourage Victorian Schools to raise funds for students who struggle with the cost of getting to school. This initiative is anticipated to be launched in 2015-2016 and will play a crucial part in securing the ongoing sustainability of this vital program.

Statistics

- The split of students receiving support is 32% female and 68% male
- 61% of students assisted are from the age group 16-17 years old
- 70% of students are Anglo-Australian
- 28% come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 2% come from a Torres Strait Islander background

Case Study – Supporting Hassan and Hussein for a better future

Hassan and Hussein are two young brothers from Somalia. They arrived with their sister as unaccompanied minors in Australia a few years ago after a traumatic time in their home town and in refugee camps.

Hassan and Hussein had been living in a shared house but after they could not afford the rent they were evicted. For more than two months they had been couch surfing with friends and sleeping rough as neither one of them received any income support. Although their sister supported them financially, she struggled herself as she had two young children.

The brothers understood that their only chance to change their situation is to improve their English and complete The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning to increase their chances of employment and maybe even further study. However they found it incredibly hard to study while not having secure accommodation and facing all the other difficulties including an increasing number of transport fines.

The welfare worker at their college told them about the Pathways to Education program and we were able to support both of them with a student travel pass to take at least one of their worries away while they worked with the welfare worker and a youth service to find suitable accommodation. The two brothers were very relieved and found that they were able to take another step towards a better future.

OUR SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE

Access Service

Overview

Travellers Aid Access Service operates from the sites at Flinders Street station and Southern Cross station seven days a week. The service is free of charge and offers services such as personal care and meal assistance to people travelling independently within the CBD area. This service is focused on the individual's needs and enables people to maintain their independence, remain active members of their community and access work and university studies. The facilities provided include an adult change table and ceiling hoist and, when required, assistance from our qualified support workers. This service is also available to support groups so they too can come into the city and access the facilities with the support of the qualified support staff when required.

Our Performance

This year saw the completion of a much needed renovation at the Flinders Street station site. In addition to a general upgrade the entrance door was replaced with an automatic door which has meant the service users have easier access as well as creating a more comfortable environment with protection from the elements and the persistent noise of the train station. An electric door was also installed for the bathroom which has resulted in independence for many service users as they are now able to use the bathroom unassisted.

Statistics

TAA continues to provide a significant amount of support to people with a disability travelling to and within the city of Melbourne.

- 5,755 hours to assistance
- 70 regular users
- 6,207 client visits
- Average 55 mins of assistance per visit

Case Study – Supporting Kate to gaining independence

Kate uses the service throughout the day and evening while she is in the city for work. Kate would not have been able to find a job if TAA was not available to offer personal care and meal assistance. This service has not only supported Kate in becoming independent day-to-day but it has also made a positive financial impact on her life. Kate has been able to set and work towards her own goals including saving for a holiday, something that she had never been able to do before she accessed this service.

Buggy Service

Overview

One of the most well loved and well used services is the Buggy Service. This service provides personal guidance and buggy pick-up and drop-off within Southern Cross Station, train platforms, coach terminals and taxi ranks. The service is for people with a disability, mobility challenges, who are frail, elderly or sensory impaired. Safe passage is ensured through the vast railway precinct and coach terminals at Southern Cross Station.

Our Performance

Another record year for the buggy service with a total of 19,995 buggy services being completed, this is a 14% increase from last year. TAA was able to meet the growing demand for this service due to the approved funding for an extra buggy and one staff member during seasonal peak periods. Extra services were provided during senior's week, two weeks during the Christmas period and two weeks during the Easter period. TAA staff and volunteers continue to be highly committed and have a proactive approach to assist and support travellers, contributing to the consistently high number of buggy service users.

To ensure the buggy service sustains the current figures it will be important that funding continues to meet the growing demand.

Statistics

YEAR	BUGGY JOBS COMPLETED	AVERAGE PER MONTH	AVERAGE PER WEEK
2013-2014	17,516	1,460	337
2014-2015	19,995	1,666	384

Case Study 1 – from our client Christine Vann

"I have a disability, the bones in both feet and knees are slowly crumbling away and I suffer a lot of pain but I continue to work the best I can. Each day I would struggle to walk to the tram on Bourke St. and I missed the train a couple times because I just could not walk a step further. My travel companions began to worry and one morning they each took an arm and literally dragged me into Traveller's Aid and that was the day my life changed for the better. I would catch the buggy in the mornings and in the evenings; it was bliss on my feet and I started smiling at work again. I breathe a sigh of relief as I walk in the doors at Travellers Aid and I look forward to the happy faces that greet me. I have come to feel part of a very special family and I fear that without their help I would have stopped work all together and accepted a life on a pension. Travellers Aid have turned my life around, like the butterfly effect, the simple act of kindness has made all the difference in my humble life."

Case Study 2 – from our client Faye Pattison

"Back in the good old days Spencer St. Station was pretty easy to get around in, but in 2006 the revamp happened, and oh boy was I in trouble. Let me tell you why, I'm totally blind and I work with a guide dog. I live in country Victoria and travel on a V/Line train to Southern Cross Station each day for work in the CBD.

In the good old days it was a simple matter to locate individual platforms with my dog's assistance. But then in 2006 when the station was completely altered to become the new Southern Cross, my travel to and from work became a daily nightmare. I found myself surrounded by endless open space and noise with no defining features to help me locate the correct platform. Then I discovered Travellers Aid, and all my worry and stress evaporated and my dog Stony and I have been using their great service ever since. Each evening Stony takes me to the Travellers Aid office where I'm met by a friendly staff member who shows me to one of their great little buggies to be seated comfortably with Stony at my feet and driven right to my train. They even find me a seat on the train so I feel a bit like a princess, and I'm sure Stony believes the buggy is his personal chariot.

What a fantastic service! Thank you everyone at Traveller's Aid. I couldn't manage without you."

OUR SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE

Mobility Equipment Hire Service

Overview

Travellers Aid Mobility Equipment Hire Service located at Flinders Street Station and Southern Cross Station provides people with mobility needs access to urban experiences. This hire service has a point of difference from other hire facilities in that the equipment can be used across Melbourne on a daily, weekly or monthly basis and it contributes to making Melbourne a more accessible city to all. Mobility equipment for hire includes electric and manual wheel chairs, three or four wheel electric scooters, walking sticks and frames, white canes and children strollers.

Our Performance

The Mobility Equipment Hire service continues to work in conjunction with Melbourne City Council. This partnership ensures the service will expand, enabling mobility equipment to be accessible for visitors and locals across metropolitan Melbourne.

The Mobility Equipment Hire Service has provided equipment for visitors (local, national and international), conference organisers (national, international) and special events, including the International Aids conference, National Flower Show, Senior's week and ANZAC parade.

There is now a permanent hire agreement with Public Transport Victoria, to provide mobility equipment for their program "Walking in the shoes of others". This program is for participants to gain experience and insight of what it may be like to access public transport when you have a disability.

The relationship with the National Gallery Victoria (NGV) has moved forward and TAA now provide a scooter and walker on a trial bases to ensure patrons of NGV have the opportunity to access mobility equipment when required.

Statistics

- Total rentals 787 which is an 19% increase on last year
- 30% of hirers were from regional Victoria
- 36% of hirers reside in Melbourne
- 25% hires were from interstate
- 9% hirers were from overseas.

Purpose of hire

- 29% of hirers were to visit family and friends
- 30% of hirers were for special events, (conferences, football, seniors week and concerts)
- 25% of hirers were for use in the CBD
- 14% of hirers were for attending appointments and other activities.

Case Study – Giving Michelle and Gayle independence and a great day out

"We arrived into Southern Cross where we were met by a friendly face from Travellers Aid. We were back to the office where we picked up our hire scooters for the day trip to Bendigo. We had the friendliest, best and safest driver ever, his attitude and concern for our health and well being was a credit to him and TAA.

The scooters were a godsend for us as I suffer with herniated discs and sciatica in my lower back and my friend has fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis. Consequently without the scooters we would have been incapable of walking for any length of time let alone make it home to Yallourn North and Churchill in one piece.

This service is the best I've ever come across and when I go to Melbourne I use them regularly. People in similar health situations would be lost without this kind of service as it means that we can still get around town with ease without hobbling or stumbling about. The staff at TAA are friendly and always helpful to everyone who enters their office. I would like to thank everyone involved for the wonderful service provided to us."

Medical Companion Service

Overview

The Medical Companion Service empowers regional and interstate travellers who come to Melbourne for medical appointments and ensures their independence and autonomy is maintained. Our trained volunteers meet the service user at their train, bus, tram or taxi and guide them to and from medical appointments anywhere in central Melbourne. This service is delivered by dedicated, trained volunteers and although the service is free recipients are required to cover their own travel fare.

Our Performance

The Medical Companion Service profile continues to grow and TAA is focused on developing referral networks across regional Victoria. Referrals range from non-government agencies, community health centres, medical practitioners, hospitals, families and self referrals.

The Medical Companion Service has established itself as a service that can be relied upon, is supportive and an invaluable asset to the community which has been illustrated by feedback from the referrals network (non government agencies, Regional Health Services, Refugee Support organisations, Melbourne Hospitals and service users).

A volunteer has been recruited and trained to take on the administration of this service which had allowed more time to be dedicated to promoting the service.

Our partnership with V/Line continues to strengthen and demonstrates TAA's ability to successfully work with non-government funders on a long term basis.

The challenge is to ensure funding for the program continues and that all regional communities have access to this unique service.

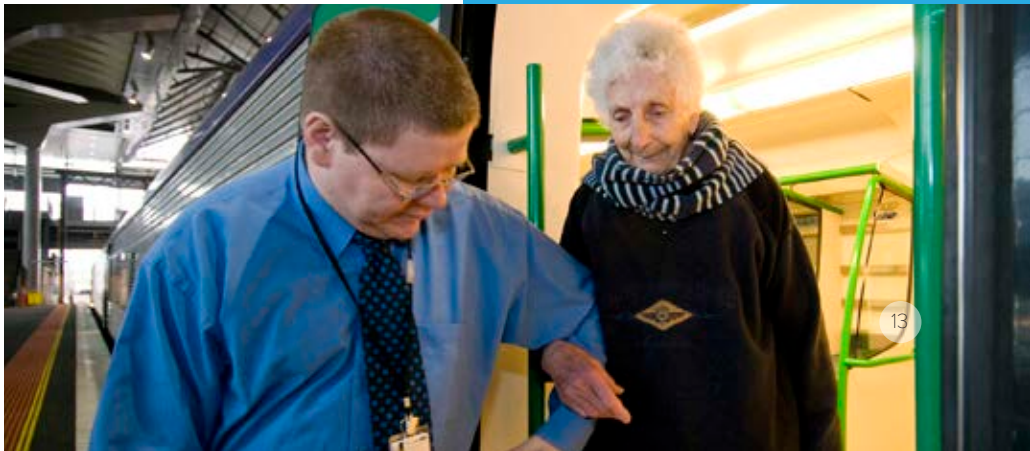
Statistics

- 333 medical companion services completed
- An average of 28 per month
- 20 Active volunteers contributed 1,333 hours
- 90% of clients travel from regional Victoria
- 45% of clients come from North West Victoria
- 45% of clients come from South East Victoria

There is evidence that the demand for the service is increasing and that request from individuals, NGO's and medical centres are increasing day-to-day.

Case Study – TAA supports Kathleen Long on short notice

"I reside in Wonthaggi, Victoria and have been using your services since July 2014 as I had recently arrived from Tasmania and was not familiar with the trams and how to get to my destination. I registered with the Travellers Aid Medical Companion Service and request the service of a volunteer, sometimes twice a month. All the volunteers have been absolutely marvellous to me each time. Last week I received a phone call from my plastic surgeon advising me to meet with him, I had less than two days to find a support person and after contacting many agencies I had no response. I then rang Travellers Aid and was pleased when they responded and informed me that a volunteer would support me at my appointment. I met with the volunteer and filled her in as best as I could and was pleasantly surprised to discover that she is a pharmacist working in a hospital, and truly understood. She took notes for me and covered all aspects of the surgery which is to be done in the near future. I was so relieved she was there for me. I am truly thankful for the support of Travellers Aid Medical Companion Service and their team of volunteers."



OUR SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE

Seymour Buggy Service

Overview

Following repeated requests from the local community it was with great pleasure that together with V/Line and Community Accessability, TAA was able to re-introduce a buggy service to Seymour Station. This service is provided for older people, people with disabilities and mobility challenges and ensures that customers connecting from and to train services at Seymour Station have a smooth transit through the station.

The service was launched in November 2014 and is delivered by our local partner Community Accessability with the help of local volunteers.

Our Performance

Following the launch in November 2014 the service is well accepted and used by customers connecting through Seymour Station. The Seymour team has performed 1,341 buggy trips and is looking forward to growing the service even further.

Statistics

- 64% of service users are female
- 87% of service users are older than 56 years of age
- 22% of service users are older than 75 years of age

Case Study – Opening up new travel opportunities for Jim and Dorothy

Jim and Dorothy had been travelling from Puckapunyal to Melbourne for medical appointments using community transport. Both in their late seventies, Jim struggles to walk even short distances and Dorothy was awaiting surgery for a hip replacement.

Both Jim and Dorothy were reluctant to drive all the way to Melbourne themselves as they find driving in the city quite overwhelming. Catching a train from Seymour had not been an option as Jim struggled with the steep ramp at Seymour station.

When the Buggy Service was re-introduced to Seymour, Jim and Dorothy gave it a try. They drove their car from Puckapunyal to Seymour. At the coach terminal they were met by the buggy and taken to their platform. At Southern Cross Station they were picked up by the buggy again and taken to the tram stop from where they continued their journey.

Jim and Dorothy found the service easy to use and very helpful. They realised that using this service would open up new opportunities for them to travel from Seymour, not only for medical reasons but also to meet with friends and family, enjoy performances and exhibitions or go shopping.

Jim and Dorothy are now regular users of the Seymour Buggy Service.

FLINDERS STREET CENTRE RECEIVES UPGRADE

The Travellers Aid Australia site at Flinders Street Station underwent a much needed renovation thanks to Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM).

After seven years of providing services seven days a week to thousands of customers, most of which use mobility aids, the centre at Flinders Street station was in need of repair and renovation. This year with the financial support of MTM this was able to go ahead.

The centre was given a much needed facelift with painting throughout to repair damage and the wear and tear that had occurred over the years.

Automatic front doors were installed which block out the external noise, keeps the heat in throughout winter and the centre cool in summer. An extra split system was also installed that works well with the new doors to keep the centre and everyone visiting much more comfortable.

An electric door was also installed for the bathroom with has resulted in independence for many service users as they are now able to use the bathroom unassisted.

Without the support of MTM this renovation would never have been possible.

OUR SUCCESSES

TAA focused on strategic development and sustainable growth during the year and the successes include:

Sustainability

Building on the success from the previous year, TAA has made it a priority to ensure its operations are financially secure and sustainable into the future. The implementation of a new fundraising strategy aligned to TAA's support and donor bases has proven to be successful. A number of fundraising events and activities were conducted during the year including participating in the People's Choice Community Lottery and the Travellers Aid Trivia Night. TAA frontline staff and volunteers worked hard to increase revenue from services provided for a fee at the sites. Sound financial management combined with successful fundraising activities contributed to TAA's strong financial position.

Strategic focus

Changes to TAA's organisational structure and changes to government policies made it a timely exercise to review and adapt strategic directions, resulting in a new Strategic Plan 2015-2017.

The plan has 5 key areas:

- Exploration and growth of services
- Financial security and sustainability
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Capacity building
- Branding and communications

Partnerships and collaborations

Being aware of the current policy and funding environment, TAA has continued to build strong and meaningful relationships to achieve best outcomes for services users, increase reach, create efficiencies and ensure value for our funders. TAA has built on existing partnerships as well as developed new ones with a strategic focus in mind.

TAA was able to secure a partnership with RACV. This partnership will enable TAA to grow the Medical Companion Service and develop and deliver a Community Travel Training program to communities across metropolitan Melbourne and country Victoria. In November 2014, TAA in partnership with V/Line and Community Accessability launched the Seymour Station Buggy Service, thus reaching more regional customers and enabling them to use the bus and train network.

TAA's pilot site in Wangaratta was successfully transferred to Community Accessability, TAA's local partner, who continues to operate the site as an Access Spot. This is a great outcome for the Wangaratta community given the challenges to secure ongoing funding for the site.

Service delivery

Service delivery at a frontline level has continued to grow and exceed targets:

- Service provision increased by 5%.
- The Buggy Assistance and Guidance service experienced a 15% increase in usage.
- Emergency Relief increased by 36% until the loss of Department of Social Services funding.

In order to be able to meet the increasing demand on our services, TAA continues to explore the increased participation of suitably trained and skilled volunteers in service delivery as well as administration functions. Despite a funding cut from the federal government for TAA's Emergency Relief program, TAA has been able to continue to provide a limited suite of assistance thanks to supportive partners including V/Line and PTV.

DURRING 2014–2015

TRAVELLERS AID HAS:

PROVIDED FACILITIES FOR **3,729** parents travelling with children

ACCOMMODATED **50,571** uses of our secure LOUNGE

PROVIDED ACCESS FOR **6,983** PHONE/FAX/INTERNET SESSIONS

SAFELY STORED **8,808** items of LUGGAGE at Flinders St

ASSISTED **73,747** people with general enquiries & transport info

provided use of ACCESSIBLE TOILETS **7,510** TIMES

PROVIDED **707** items of MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

SOS PROVIDED **12,100** episodes of EMERGENCY RELIEF

PROVIDED MEDICAL COMPANIONS FOR **333** people

PROVIDED facilities for **2,714** people to have a shower or a rest

PROVIDED **21,255** ASSISTANCE/BUGGY RIDES

KEPT **14,301** people HYDRATED

Provided toilet facilities for **14,380** people

Welcomed **749** INDIVIDUALS on tours of our facilities

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Building on the success of 2014-2015, TAA's focus moving forward will continue to be on capacity building and strategic and sustainable growth.

Service delivery
TAA will analyse its current suite of services to ensure services are relevant as well as sustainable in the current operating environment. TAA will explore avenues to re-instate the full Emergency Relief service offering. TAA will continue to work with the National Disability Insurance Agency and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services to identify how best the organisation can transition to become a service provider within the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Fundraising
With the ultimate goal to further diversify TAA's funding base, our fundraising will focus on building a strong donor base as well as establishing new corporate partnerships. TAA will work to implement a number of long-term funding strategies such as; a bequest program, regular giving and a social enterprise.

Collaborative Partnerships
Strong partnerships will remain an integral part of TAA's success in addition to building our current relationships with government, community organisations and the corporate sector, TAA will continue to identify and pursue further strategic partnerships and alliances within the community and corporate sectors. This will enable greater reach to people in need, increase TAA's capacity to do more and reduce duplication of effort where ever possible.

IT systems
Effective and functional IT systems are an important component to TAA's capacity to work efficiently for many front line and back office functions. TAA will review its IT systems and work towards a system that supports the required functions and is adaptable to future needs.

100th Anniversary
2016 will be a big year at TAA, turning 100 years old is a significant milestone that we will appropriately celebrate with our community and stakeholders with a number of events and activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & SUPPORTERS

Patron in Chief

- Mrs Elizabeth Chernov

Community Partners

- Community Accessability Inc.
- Country Women's Association of Victoria
- Destination Melbourne
- RACV
- V/Line

Corporates and Supporters

- AssetCo Management PTY Ltd
- Bay City Events
- CQ Functions
- ER Victoria
- Funde.
- Grill'd
- Helloworld - Lower Templestowe
- HLB Mann Judd
- HR Legal
- Infoxchange
- People's Choice Credit Union – Community Lottery
- Lions Clubs of Victoria
- Metro Trains Melbourne
- Public Transport Ombusdman
- Rotary Clubs of Victoria
- Skybus
- Techware
- Telstra
- The Westin Hotel
- Transdev
- Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS)
- Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce (VECCI)
- Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC)
- Website Travel
- Wilson Security
- Wrightway Marketing
- Yarra Trams
- On the Line

Government Supporters

- Australian and Victorian Government under the Home and Community Care Program (HAAC)
- City of Melbourne
- Department of Justice
- Public Transport Victoria (PTV)
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Health and Human Services Victoria

Bequest

- The Henry Berry Estate
- The Mackie Bequest

Trust and Foundations

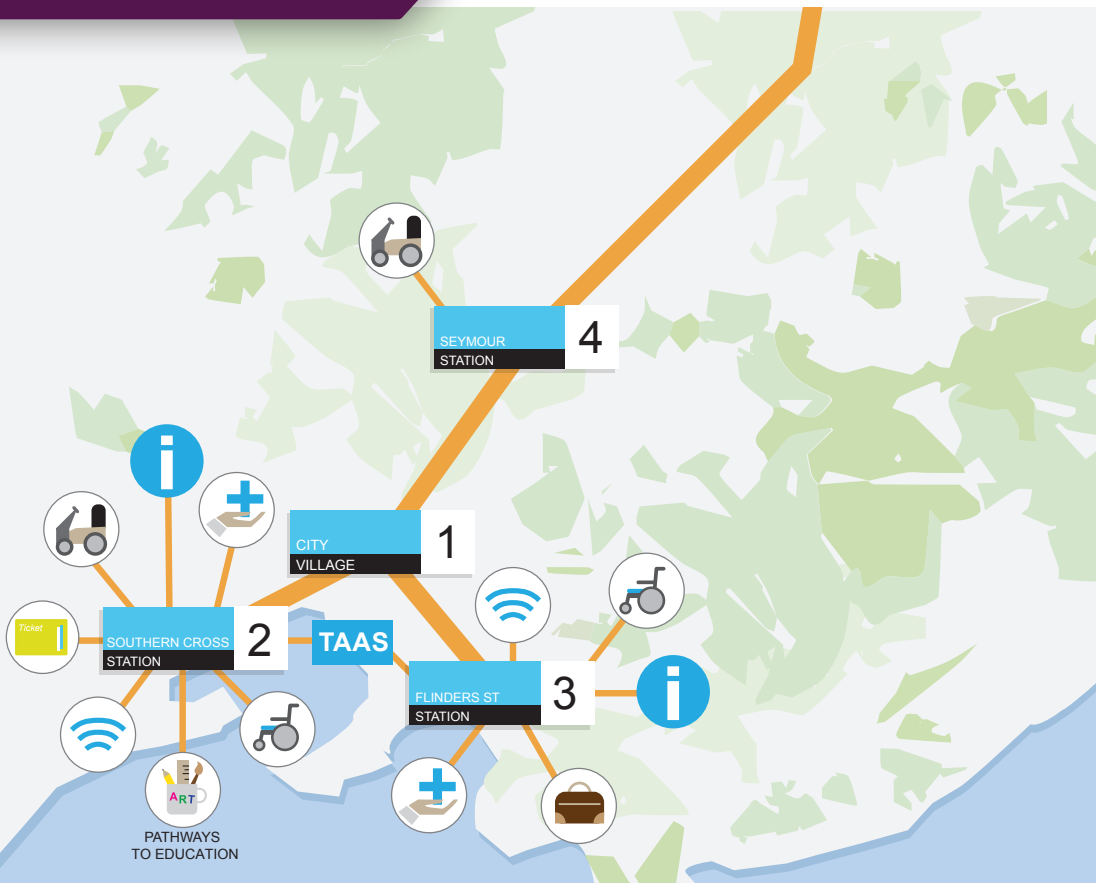
- Grosvenor Foundation
- State Trustees
- StreetSmart
- The Aged Persons Welfare Foundation
- The Besen Family Foundation
- The Dawn Wade Foundation
- The Flora and Frank Leith Charitable Foundation
- The Invergowrie Foundation
- The Public Records Office
- The William Angliss Charitable Foundation (Victoria)

A giant thank you to all our Board members, Ambassadors, volunteers and donors. We couldn't do it without you.

SERVICES AND LOCATIONS

LEGEND

- Buggy Service
- Emergency Relief Services
  Providing subsidised fares to those in distress
- Internet Access
- Luggage Storage Hire
- Medical Companion Service
- Equipment Hire
- Pathways to Education
  Enabling school children to attend school
- Transit Info
- TAAS — Travellers Aid Access Service
  Providing personal care to travellers in need



SUPPORT US

Donate now

Visit: www.travellersaid.org.au

Donations are tax deductable.

ABN 79 004 080 862

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ACCESSIBILITY

If you would like to request an accessible version of this Annual Report, call (03) 9654 2600 or email info@travellersaid.org.au.

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