Strategic Plan
2018-2028

Second Edition

travellersaid.org.au

Travellers Aid

Message from the Chair and CEO

Travellers Aid is pleased to share with you our ten-year strategic plan. At Travellers Aid we have been helping Victoria's mobility-impaired service users for over 100 years. We are proud of our history as a non-profit and we are committed to continuing our tradition of service and support to others.

We believe everyone has the right to feel included and part of their community. Our goal is to enhance accessibility and inclusivity, helping people travel independently and make the journeys that are such an important part of everyday life. We hope that the work we do continues to play an integral role in allowing those with mobility challenges to lead full and rich lives, feeling confident and supported.

This Strategic Plan has been informed by consultation with transport providers, state government, academics and researchers. We have also consulted with our internal and external stakeholders, including our service users, staff and volunteers. Population growth, an ageing population, and rising expectations for those living with a disability, will likely generate an increase in the demand for our services. This, coupled with a more lenient funding environment, will create new challenges and opportunities.

It's important that we can respond positively and competitively to these future changes, whilst ensuring that respect for the individual remains at the heart of what we do. This has set the context for the choices reflected within this strategic plan.

To this end, we have identified three priority areas:

Sector Leadership, Growth, and Financial Sustainability. These priority areas will guide our decision-making over the next ten years, and we have developed specific and measurable targets to help us focus our work to deliver practical outcomes.

Intended to be a dynamic road map, our strategic plan will be reviewed regularly, and supported by continued stakeholder consultation and feedback so that it remains fit for purpose. In this spirit, we invite you to review our strategic plan and to let us know how we are doing. Your feedback will be invaluable as we empower people of all abilities to connect, engage and participate in everyday life.

Bev Excell
Chair of Board

Elias Lebbos
Chief Executive Officer

"Travellers Aid is a safe haven, with the most caring and helpful people keen to do what they could for me. Your kindness touched me and I commend your humanity. Thank you."

Empowering people with travel-related challenges to connect, engage and participate.

Who we are

Travellers Aid is committed to enabling individuals of all abilities to connect, engage and participate in their community. We take pride in the diverse backgrounds of our team which reflect the communities in which we work. We operate ethically and are guided by a volunteer Board of Directors who ensure strong and transparent governance. Travellers Aid's workforce consists of 75% dedicated volunteers and 25% committed staff who are motivated by creating real outcomes for the people we serve.

What we stand for

Respect for the individual is at the heart of what we do.

We empower people by providing choice, independence and freedom to travel.

We are compassionate to the challenges faced by others.

We are nimble and responsive to changing needs.

We enhance people's capacity to be their best and live life to the fullest.

What we do

Connection Assistance

We operate year round Connection Assistance services, including buggy, wheelchair assistance and personal guidance, at major hubs across Victoria. Our buggy and personal guidance services assist people with mobility challenges to achieve safe passage through high sensory or crowded areas. Providing this connecting link enables people to travel independently and participate fully in life.

Crisis Travel Program

By providing subsidised public transport tickets, we assist people in crises, court matters, employment opportunities or other compelling reasons to reach a place of safety and support within Victoria. This service also assists people who need to travel because of an unexpected emergency situation and those experiencing short-term or long-term disadvantage who want to reunite with family, friends or other support services so they can stay connected and feel safe.

Disability Service & Lounge

Our Disability Service provides a range of services for those who have a disability, enabling them to have the independence to access work, education or social activities. Our lounge areas at Southern Cross and Flinders Street stations also provide a safe, welcoming and relaxing space, as well as providing other services for people travelling through these stations.

Community Education

Our Community Education presentations aim to educate community groups on how to assist people to stay mobile, by providing travel knowledge that can help them feel confident and safe whilst travelling. It also allows people to maintain independence and to become self-advocating users of public transport. Participants are also made aware of the further supports and services Travellers Aid provides.

Companion Service

We provide trained volunteer companions who are able to accompany service users to and from essential appointments and services, as well as social activities. Our companions are there for support and guidance, helping to build confidence when it comes to travelling independently.

Mobility Equipment

We hire a range of mobility equipment to enable people to engage and participate. This service particularly enhances the experience of visitors to Melbourne as bringing their own mobility equipment, can be challenging when travelling.

How it all started (100 years ago)

In 1916, women's lives were changing – and World War I was the catalyst. Men were leaving Australia to fight, which meant more women were travelling on their own, joining the workforce, and often leaving life in the country to venture into the city for the first time.

That same year, a group of women formed the first Travellers Aid Society of Victoria, a multi-denominational group led by volunteers of the YWCA.

Over the intervening years, we have adapted to the changing needs of our society.

One hundred years later, that group – now Travellers Aid Australia – is still operating in Victoria. The organisation now supports men, women and children as they travel.

And Travellers Aid still depends on the support of volunteers to operate.

"It is quite remarkable that for more than half the life of our city and state, there has been a Travellers Aid, quietly going about its vital role."

Trevor Huggard, AM. former Lord Mayor of Melbourne, former Travellers Aid Australia board member.

Our market is changing and presenting different challenges

The rapid growth of Victoria's and Melbourne's population, coupled with an increasingly ageing population, will be a challenge for Victoria's transport infrastructure whilst the expectations of those living with a disability to engage and participate are increasing.

The demand for Travellers Aid's services will grow rapidly, both in terms of number of people requiring our services and the number of locations at which we operate. Equally, it is likely that we will be operating in more crowded and challenging environment.

The attitudes of governments to funding is also changing. Governments, of all persuasions, are looking to reduce the drain on the public purse. There is no certainty over the level of future public-sector funding available and competition for funds will likely increase. Providers will need to become more focused on the individual customers and service users' needs in their service offerings.

Despite the excellent work we have done for over a hundred years Travellers Aid is not well known outside of the people who have used the service or the organisations with whom we have partnered. As a result, the proportion of the market Travellers Aid serve is relatively small. The challenge for Travellers Aid is to remain relevant and become a key player in a rapidly growing market.

Our aspirations for the future

Travellers Aid, with its experience and track record, is in a unique position to understand and provide the support to people who face mobility challenges.

There is a sense of responsibility that goes with this position and we, at Travellers Aid, are acutely aware of and accept this responsibility.

Consequently, we are seeking to meet the growing needs of our clients and our service users.

Our vision	Our mission	Our goal
A society where people with mobility challenges are treated with dignity and respect, and are able to lead full and rich lives with confidence.	Empowering people with travel-related challenges to connect, engage and participate within their communities through the use of public transport.	To be the recognised expert in the delivery of services to people facing travel-related challenges.

Our strategic priorities

Over the next ten years, we will meet these challenges by implementing the following strategic priorities...

1.0 Sector Leadership | **2.0 Scalability & Growth** | **3.0 Financial Sustainability**

To be the recognised expert in the delivery of services to people facing travel-related challenges.

1.0 Sector Leadership

Become a sector-leader, based on being an evidence-based organisation with a stronger market visibility.

1. **Innovate and improve the service user experience** based on deeper understandings of the changing needs of our users. For example, home-to-station and station-to-home journeys. Use technology as part of this improved experience, e.g. a Travellers Aid app. Take more of a design-driven customer-centric approach to enhancing customer service, for example, the use of journey maps.
2. **Better capture of data from current operations** including the stories behind the data. Define what data needs to be captured and how. This will also include data around financial efficiencies.
3. **Develop a targeted brand strategy.** Focus on influencing three elements – awareness, consideration and preference with service users and partners. Create a brand synonymous with being the recognised experts in the design and delivery of services to people facing travel-related challenges.
4. **Advocacy.** Become better at being at the design table and advocating on mobility issues when new infrastructure is being contemplated.
5. **Develop more influential strategic partnerships with transport providers** and destinations based on being a more innovative solution provider to them.
6. **Partner with other organisations** (e.g. universities) that can, for example, carry out research that can inform and guide us in the best ways to assist our service users.

2.0 Scalability & Growth

Ensuring Travellers Aid is able to meet the expected growth in demand for services without compromising service quality.

1. **Be strategic about growth.**
   - Focus on market penetration. There will be significant demand from the existing market segments and that should be our focus rather than also focusing on new market segments.
   - Proactive focus on Victoria, reactive focus on the rest of Australia. Develop in our immediate geographical area first and refine the model of service. If opportunities arise interstate. These will be assessed on a case by case basis but we will not be pursuing such opportunities on a proactive basis.
   - Focus our growth on the growth corridors as identified by Infrastructure Victoria.
   - Focus on a select number of key destinations in and around Melbourne.
2. **Develop a systematic repeatable process for growing.** The capacity of Travellers Aid to expand on a 'modular' basis – location by location. Ensuring that all major forms of transport to and from these locations are addressed.
3. **Focus on our strengths.**
   - **Evaluate our current service offerings**. Evaluate our current services and eliminate those that are non-core. Do this in a way that has minimal impact on Travellers Aid's financial position, image and morale.
   - **Don't try to resource everything.** Identify potential alliance partners where there are synergies. In so doing expand the potential resource base for servicing our communities.
4. **Ensure the scalability of the volunteer program.** Maintain high levels of volunteer engagement and satisfaction.
5. **Review the organisation structure** to ensure the organisation is adaptable in terms of structure, people and skills.
6. **Protect and enhance the Traveller's Aid culture.** Clarify our values and develop a process of making them real every day. Engage and grow our people.

3.0 Financial Sustainability

Diversify funding sources and reduce dependence on public sector funding and develop a sound financial position for the future.

1. **Improve our business cases**. In respect of commercial grants and other business opportunities using, in part, the improved access to data but also through the learnings achieved through closer strategic partnership with transport providers and destinations. Develop consistent decision criteria for assessing business opportunities.
2. **Seek out commercial (social enterprise) opportunities within the core and related business of Travellers Aid.** Ensure those with the ability to pay, contribute to the cost of these services.
3. **NDIS.** Currently, there are no clear opportunities within the NDIS for transport providers at this time. In fact, there is little focus as yet on the NDIS within the transport sector. However, this is an evolving situation and consequently, the NDIS will be a 'participate-and-watch' strategy for Travellers Aid.
4. **Explore and grow other sources of funding.** Bequests, alliance partners etc.
5. Use closer strategic alliances with transport providers to explore **additional services** that fit within the core business of Travellers Aid. Explore service that can add value to the providers and yield additional revenue streams, e.g. educational programs.
6. **Continuously improve efficiencies and seek to reduce the cost to serve.**

Travellers Aid

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