



Leichhardt Marrickville Community Transport Group (LMCTG)

November 2016 Newsletter, Issue #14

Message from the Executive Officer

As I sit here in my office and look out the window, the weather is calm and warm. Yesterday, it was cool and windy. Who *knows* what will happen tomorrow? Maybe a hurricane. You never know what tomorrow brings, so there's no time like the present to go out and get things done! :-)

Annual General Meeting

We conducted our AGM on Friday 30 September at the Seaview Hall in Dulwich Hill with approximately 12 clients in attendance. The event went well apart from the fact that the returning officer had difficulty finding the venue. Luckily, she ended up getting there on time and the new Management Committee was duly elected. The clients who attended the meeting made some suggestions about improving the service and we will talk about this further at the Annual Information Day in April next year.

Christmas Period Transport Schedules

There will be reduced services in the weeks beginning **26/12/2016** and **2/1/2017**. Clients are advised to contact the office for details.

The Leichhardt Shopping service will operate on the 28th and 29th of December 2016, and the 4th and 5th of January 2017. Normal services will resume on **Monday 9th January 2017**.

Clients Christmas Party

We have had to change the date of our Clients' Christmas Party to **Friday 25th November 2016**. This is due to Tom Foster Community Centre being completely booked out for December. You can start to book your place from **Monday 7th November**. I advise all clients who are interested to book on that Monday to avoid disappointment. This year we have decided to go for the barbecue option. This is the set BBQ lunch: 1 marinated chicken fillet thigh, 1 sausage, coleslaw salad, potato salad, and 1 bread roll and butter. Dessert will be trifle and fruit cordial. **There is no fee for the transport and the party. There will be no other services operating on this day.**

2017 Annual Information Day

We did not have an Annual Information Day in 2016, so we are going to have one in 2017. This will be held on **Friday 21st April 2017** at the Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club. The day is an opportunity for us to give clients information about what is happening with our service and community transport in general. It is also an opportunity for clients to give us feedback about our service and how we can improve it. **There will be no fee for transport to the club and no fee for lunch.**

If you want to cancel your trip, let us know ASAP!
This works for everyone.

Tips to ensure we can work together more effectively

Give us due notice if you need to cancel a booking

I have been looking at the service statistics that Julie (Service Coordinator) prepares every month. If we compare the number of cancellations for all services for the month of August between 2015 & 2016, we find that the cancellations have been reduced by almost **90%**.

There has also been a decline in late cancellations and at-the-door cancellations.

We appreciate the cooperation of clients in this matter, but there is always room for improvement. If you need to cancel a transport booking, please ring our office and let us know by **12 noon** the day before you are due to travel with us. If you call and no one answers the phone please leave a message on our answering machine, as this will count as informing us of your cancellation.

Do not unbuckle your seatbelt before the vehicle stops

We know there have been occasions when clients undo their seatbelts when the vehicle is still in motion. This is illegal, unsafe, and is obviously a concern to our drivers who are then placed in the precarious position of driving in breach of the road rules. If caught, drivers run the risk of losing demerit points and their licence, which jeopardises both their livelihood and our services. You are required to keep your seatbelt buckled for the duration of your journey. Please only unbuckle your seatbelt when the vehicle has come to a complete halt.

Don't turn your TV or radio on too loud

We know that some clients have hearing problems so you may tend to turn the volume up on the radio or television in the morning. This can create problems when either the office or driver is trying to call you. Also you may not be able to hear the driver knocking at your door to take you to your appointment. We often get clients saying that the driver did not come to collect them. The driver has gone to the door and knocked and no one has responded. Our Transport Schedulers have also reported that when talking to clients it is sometimes hard to hear you as the radio is too loud. To avoid these inconveniences, please turn the volume down around the time you are expecting us to pick you up.

Book transport as soon as you get an appointment

When you get a medical appointment, particularly a specialist, call us right away and make the booking for transport. This way you stand a better chance of getting transport and not having to go on the waiting list.

Be ready to go 10 minutes before driver is due to arrive

Driving in the Inner West of Sydney is becoming more difficult as there are more cars on the road. The construction of the WestConnex will impact on driving conditions in the Inner West even further.

There always seems to be some road works of some kind happening, with cranes on every corner in some suburbs.

All of this can lead to delays in our driver's schedules. Once drivers fall behind on their runs it is sometimes difficult for them to make up the time. We also have clients who have limited mobility and need more time to get into our vehicles.

Sometimes our drivers arrive on time and clients are not ready to leave. This situation causes our drivers a fair degree of stress and anxiety. This is a safety issue for everyone if the drivers are now behind on their run, they may think that they need to speed up so that others are not inconvenienced. This kind of anxiety increases driver fatigue. To avoid this from happening, **please be ready to go 10 minutes before your scheduled pick up time.**

Beware of scammers

We have been informed that some of our clients receive phone calls and emails asking for payment for services that they have not received. If you receive any request for payments that you think could be illegitimate, talk to a friend or a family member before making any payments. Please be careful or suspicious about anyone asking for payment via a phone call or an email.

Have the right change

Although we know that this is not always possible it would be very useful to the driver if you had the right change for your trip. This is especially important to the driver at the beginning of the day when they have very little change.

Returning home after surgery

Clients who book transport to go home following surgery/procedure of some kind must present a letter to the Driver from their doctor/nurse, stating that they are **“Fit to Travel”**. Drivers have the right to refuse transport if this is not presented, as this is part of LMCTG Work Health & Safety Policy.

Carers acting independently of Drivers

Some of our clients have carers or volunteers to help them get to their appointments. Having carers to assist our clients is an important part of our service and we greatly appreciate the help that carers give to our clients. It is however, important that Carers work cooperatively with the drivers and comply with their directions. We recently had an incident where a carer had an accident doing something that was best left to the driver. Carers' names should be registered with the office. If you have a new carer let us know.

Mobility Aids & Mobility Assessments

Clients who have had mobility assessments are sometimes recommended to obtain Mobility Aids, such as walkers. If you need to obtain a mobility aid please call our office and we can arrange transport to obtain it. We will help you obtain the aid you require and transport it home in our vehicle. If you want any further information about this please call the office.

Rotation of Drivers

We recently received a question from a client wondering why we move drivers around to different services. There are two main reasons for this. The first reason is purely **logistical**. If you have a driver that is sick or injured, is in training or on annual leave we need to have someone who can hit the ground running. We practice a driver rotation policy so that all drivers can substitute for each other at a day's notice if required. The second is about **balancing workloads**. Some services are more difficult, more time pressured, with less breaks and downtime and therefore more likely to cause driver fatigue. By rotating drivers between services there is more equity in driver workload.

Group Medical Transport

We now operate a Group Medical Transport 4 days a week. We introduced this service to reduce the number of clients who did not get the service they required for medical appointments. The service is designed to allow clients to have later returns after their appointments. Clients can now have returns up to **4:00 PM**. Morning pickups begin at **7:30 AM**.

Booking Appointments in 2017

If you want to book appointments for 2017, you can start booking from **Monday 12 December 2016**.



Waiting time on return trips

Sydney's roads are more congested than ever. For this reason, drivers may be delayed. We know that in most cases clients want to go home with a minimum waiting time. It may be the case that clients may have to wait longer than in the past due to road conditions. We will always try to return you home ASAP but we also want you to be aware that sometimes the delay in the return home is unavoidable.

There may be occasions where you may have to wait up to 60 minutes for your return home. This will not be something that happens on a regular basis but it may occur sometimes. We ask you to be aware of this and to organise your day based on the possibility of this. Please try to avoid making other arrangements based on a presumed return time.

We are looking for Volunteer Bus Assistants!

Volunteers need to be physically fit & able to assist clients. They will assist with our Shopping Services & Social Recreational Outings. All expenses will be reimbursed & we will pay for lunches on all social/recreational outings.



Website and Facebook

We've had a lot of problems with people hacking into our website. This has now been resolved, so our website is now up and running. You can visit our website at www.lctg.net.au Our Facebook page is now being updated by Minh Ai (Administration Assistant) so there will be more up to date information on there from now on.

Clients' Suggestions and Feedback

We appreciate all your suggestions and feedback. Sometimes your feedback can be critical and we appreciate that too. So please keep them coming. One client has suggested visiting the Harold Park Tram Sheds in Glebe. We could do that. The food is a bit pricey there but we could go to the Tigers Club in Five Dock after for lunch as a Short Day Outing.



The STRONG Program: Wednesday

The STRONG Program is an exercise program at Balmain Hospital that is designed for people over the age of 65 to help them maintain their mobility, flexibility, and strength. We transport our clients there every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. There are still some places available on the Wednesday STRONG Group Transport. If you are interested you'll need to be assessed by the STRONG Program first. Call them on 9395 2111 to arrange a free assessment.

Leichhardt Shopping Service: Thursday

Just about all of our services are continuing to grow. The Thursday Leichhardt Shopping service is an exception to this rule. The numbers have been in decline for approximately 10 months now. It is no longer practical for us to have two runs on that day. We have decided to combine the two runs into one. So the pickups on Thursday will now start at **8:40 AM**. We are trying to increase the numbers of clients using this service but this may take some time.

Want to use our Leichhardt Shopping Service?

This service operates every **Wednesday & Thursday**. We'll pick you up from your home & transport you to Leichhardt Marketplace. You will be given time to shop, and our friendly bus assistant will help you load your goods onto the bus and bring them to your door. All this for only \$8! Give us a call on **9558 6800** to book your spot!

The more things change the more they remain the same

Like that Eagles song, LMCTG is a bit like the Hotel California "you check out any time you want but you can never leave". Earlier this year we lost Eliot, Enzo and Minh Ai, but they have now returned to the organisation in a more casual capacity. We're glad to have them back!



OUR TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING COOL THIS SUMMER!

- Prevention is better than cure. Keep blinds and curtains closed during the day to block out heat and direct sunlight.
- At night, once the temperature drops, get rid of the accumulated hot air by opening windows and doors.
- Halogen lights, dishwashers, cooking appliances and dryers all produce heat. Avoid using them during the hottest part of the day.
- If you live in a two-storey house, stay downstairs, as it will be cooler.
- Put a bottle of water in the freezer overnight. During the day, place it in front of a fan; as it melts, it cools the air around you and you will have cool water to drink.
- Know the warning signs of heat-related illness: dizziness, nausea, headache, rapid heartbeat, chest pain, fainting and breathing problems are all warning signs that help should be sought immediately.
- Wear cotton fabrics: they are breathable, soak up sweat, and promote ventilation.
- Cool down in public areas that provide free air-conditioning, such as the library, cinema and local shopping centre.
- Participate in Hydrotherapy classes at your local gym or swimming pool. This is a great way to exercise in a cool environment and socialise with your peers. Please contact our office if you would like transport to your local gym or swimming pool.
- When venturing outside on a hot day, don't forget to apply sunscreen, wear a wide-brimmed hat and long-sleeved clothing in lightweight, cotton fabrics.
- Cool yourself from the inside – drink lots of fluids, and avoid going outside or engaging in out-



LMCTG is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DOSS), NSW Aging Disability & Home Care (ADHC) and the NSW Community Transport Program.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Did you know we deliver the following services:

- Individual Transport to medical & healthcare services
- Group Medical Transport (from **7:30 AM to 4 PM**)
- Shuttle services & Shopper services in Leichhardt & Marrickville
- Social & Recreational Outings; long & short day trips
- Transport to centre-based day care centres
- Special purposes group transport for physical rehab programs e.g. STRONG program
- Special events e.g. Vivid Lights & Christmas Lights

Next round of fare increases will commence April 2017. More information in the next newsletter.

Christmas Lights

We will be doing the Christmas Lights evening trip again this year on **Friday 16 December**. We are in the process of working out where to go. We have gone to the Christmas Lights in Ashbury for the last two years so we will not go there again this year. As soon we know where we are going we will let you know, or we won't let you know and it will be a mystery trip! We'll also inform you of where we will eat dinner as soon as that information becomes available.