



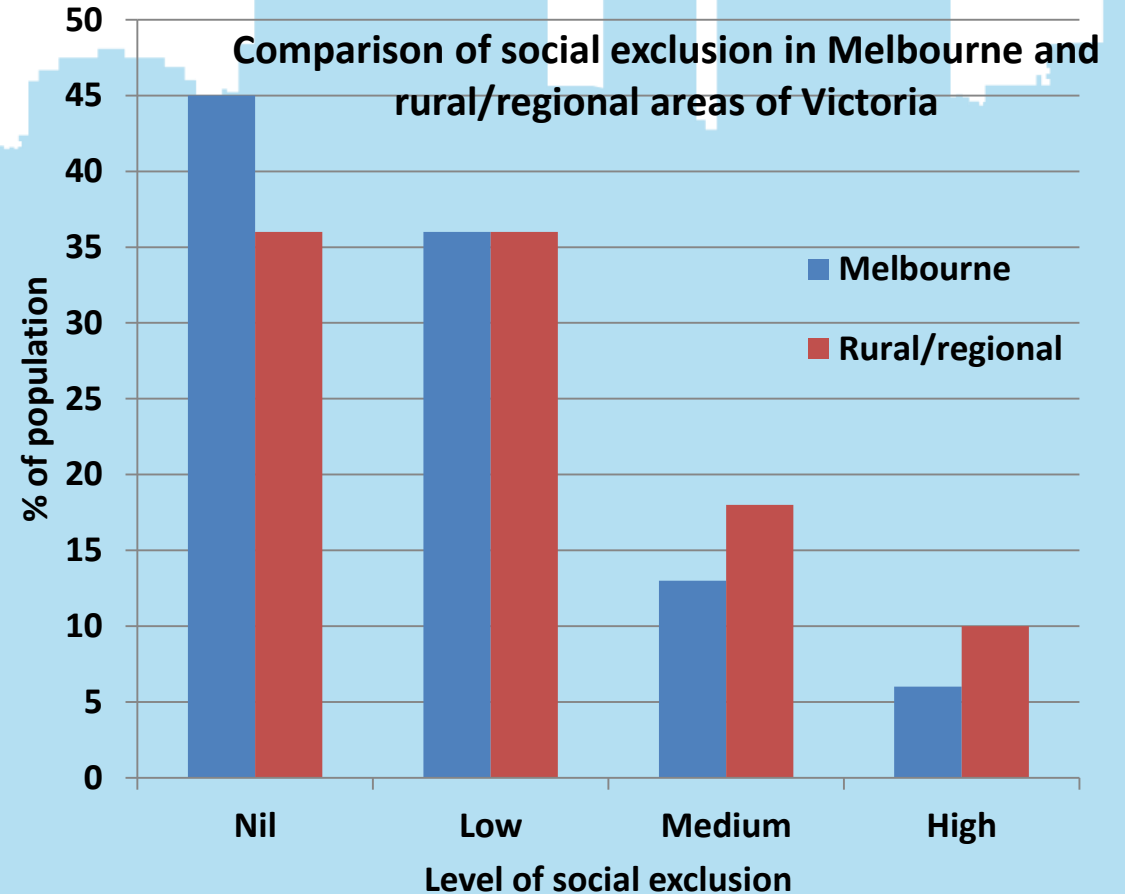
## Scope of presentation



1. Overview our research on regional mobility and social inclusion over the last 15 or so years
2. Outline the work we are doing in SA
3. Propose directions for improving regional mobility opportunities

# Social exclusion is higher in rural and regional areas

- The higher a person's social inclusion (the ability to participate in society), the higher their wellbeing and the lower the societal costs
- The lower levels of rural wellbeing suggest that this issue needs to be corrected – a problem now and a growing one in the future

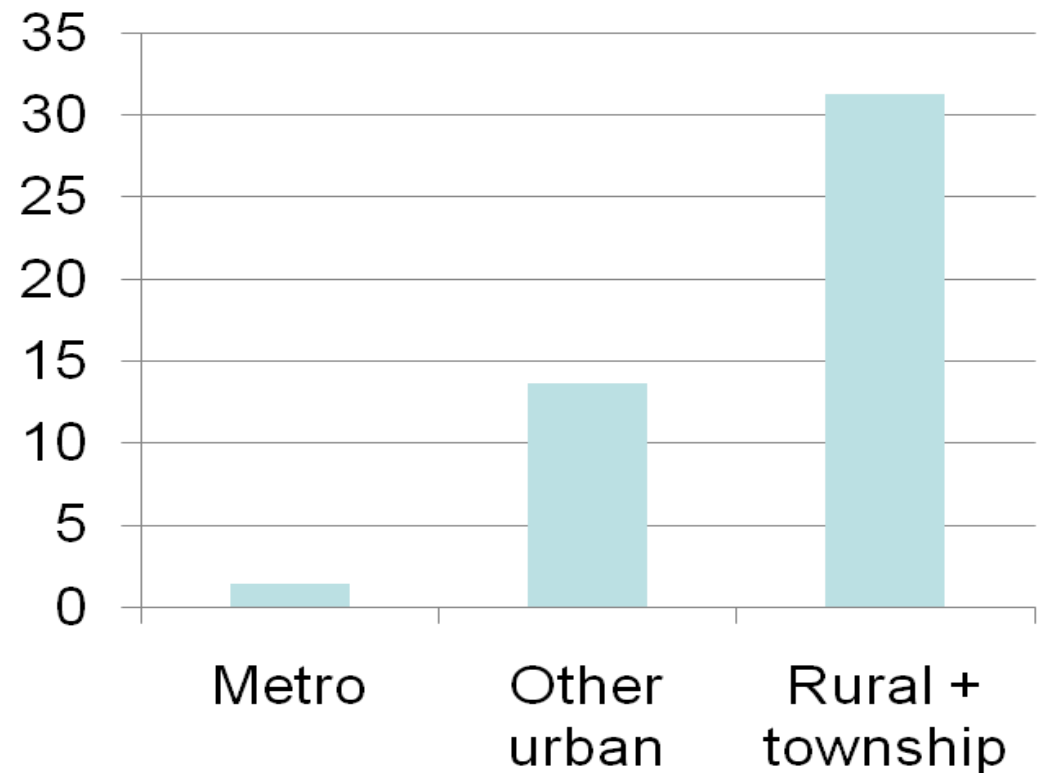


# The regional mobility challenge

Mobility is an important driver of inclusion

- An important part of this discrepancy between urban and regional is the ability to travel
- The more trips a person makes, the lower is risk of social exclusion
- NIEIR research shows accessibility to essential services (education/health/welfare) is much lower in rural/regional areas than in metro areas:
  - Average: 1.4 kms vs over 30 kms
  - Exacerbated by closure of services in small towns – costs shifted from the service to the consumer

## Accessibility to basic services (kms)



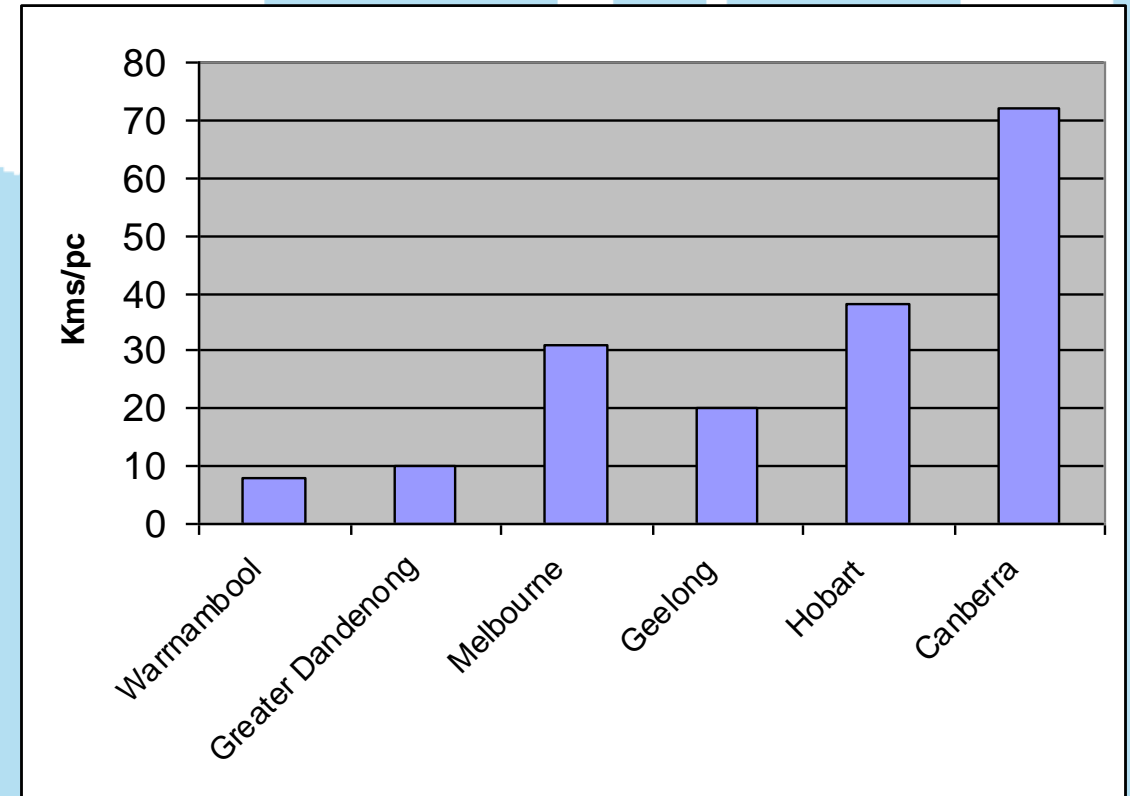
# Why mobility matters

- Facilitates access and participation to services, people, leisure, work, shopping etc
  - Fosters growth in social networks and social capital
- Poor mobility cuts people off from services and activities others take for granted (transport disadvantage)
  - Leads to poor health, learning and employment outcomes
  - Ultimately can lead to crime, anti-social behaviour and loss of community cohesion
- Poor mobility for people also has costs for governments
  - e.g. Increases welfare costs, health costs,
  - Makes it harder to deliver key Government welfare policies (e.g. access to child care and early childhood services)



# Lower levels of PT in rural and regional areas places people at higher risk of social exclusion

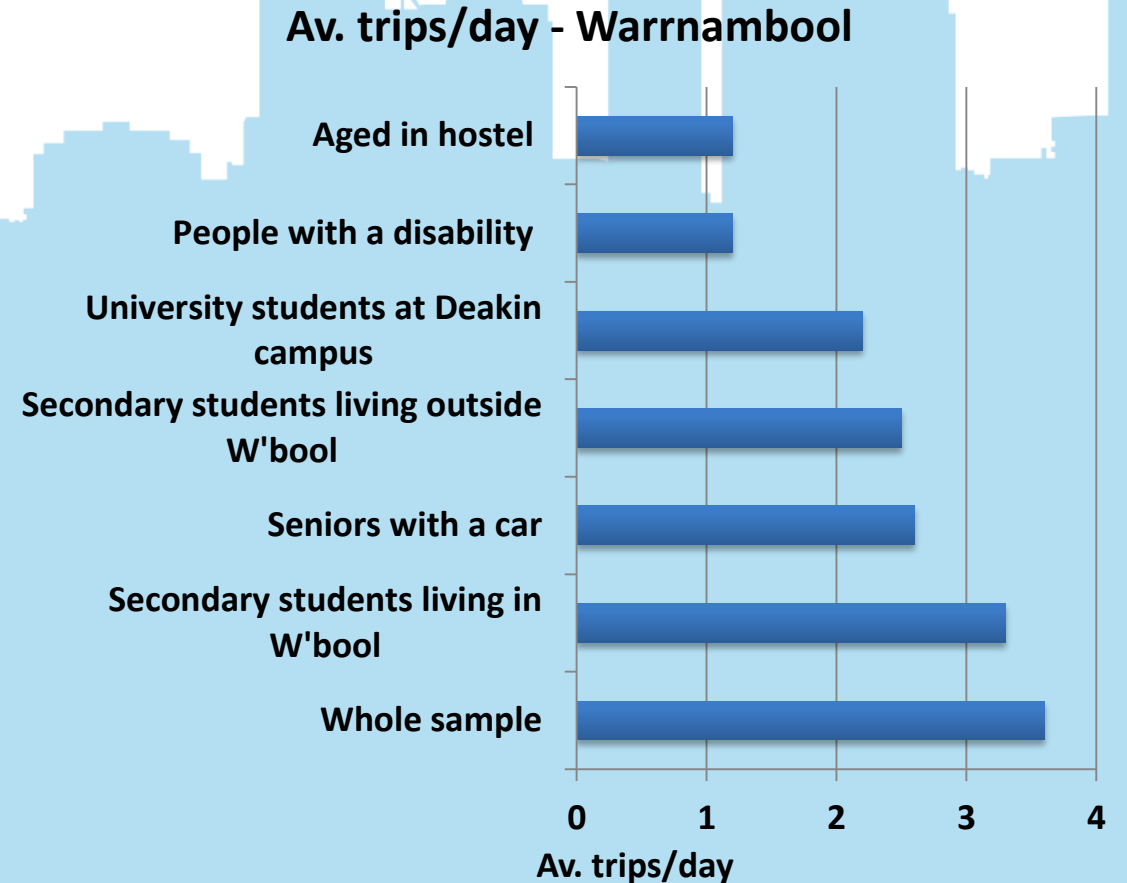
1. The provision of PT kms/per person is lower in regional and rural areas than in major urban areas
2. Rural and regional areas are more car dependent
3. Therefore those at risk of social exclusion are more at risk in rural and regional areas



# The evidence shows this: Warrnambool example:

## Trips per day (by all travel modes) for those at risk of social exclusion

- Those at risk of social exclusion travel less in Warrnambool
- Difference likely to be bigger for those outside Warrnambool





# BusVic Warrnambool study conclusion (2004)



- Personal transport is about meeting accessibility needs and fostering social inclusion
- Service delivery is typically structured around modes rather than around meeting people's needs for access
  - PT/school bus/community transport services operate in isolation, rather than as a single service delivery system
- More services are needed to maintain a physical and socially healthy community
- Regional Accessibility Committee (Planning) and ConnectU (coordinated operational transport service) established in Warrnambool
- Nearly 5 years later:
  - High demand for service
  - High benefit/cost ratio 2.81 to 1 (East West Link in Melbourne 0.45 to 1)
  - Improvement in social inclusion and wellbeing for customers in Warrnambool has been measured

# SA three regional case studies:

## 1. Riverland Region

4 major towns

- No town PT route services
- Few intra-regional PT services
- Two daily services to/from Adelaide
- PT does not support regional integration
- Appear to be a lot of CT vehicles
- Innovative intra-regional service linking route bus and disability transport



Region – horticultural – based economy

Population: 31,000



## SA casestudy 2: Mount Gambier Region

3 large towns (Mt Gambier – 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in SA)

- Urban route service density low at ~5vehicle kms/per capita over 4 routes
- Start 9am, finish 5-5.45pm, no weekend services – break for school service in the middle
  - **Shepparton** (~42,000) start 6.45am to start of last run 7pm, 6 low-floor buses across 8 towns with hourly headway (2 ½ hourly) nine Saturday services.
- >90% of users at risk of social exclusion
- Very little intra-regional PT between Mount Gambier, Millicent and Naracoorte
- Few coach services to/from Adelaide
  - Easier and much cheaper to access Melbourne!
- Some CT vehicles



Population 54,000  
Economic base: Timber

# SA casestudy 2: Port Pirie Region

One dominant town

- Town service density low at ~4vkms/pc
  - Burnie, Tas. ~20,000 pop. 12.6vkms/pc
  - Wangaratta, Vic ~17,400 pop. 14vkms/pc
- Highly 'at-risk' bus users
- Very little intra-regional PT
- Services to/from Adelaide best of 3 regions
- Need extra medical service to Adelaide
- Few CT vehicles



29,000 population

Nyrstar smelter economically dominant

# Summary of transport findings in 3 Regions

- PT service levels low across all markets (town, intra-regional to/from Adelaide, except for Port Pirie/Adelaide)
- PT does little to support regional integration
- State policy of self-funding major contributor (inc. fare concessions)
- CT varies in availability and heavily occupied with moving older people and medical transport, and in the disability transport area. Often individual car and taxi movements rather than a collective bus movement
- Poor resource use in some transport services (e.g. skilled health/welfare personnel spending time driving) = (leading to high cost)
- SA – system of Passenger Transport Networks – designed to meet unmet transport needs:
  - operate variously where they are present
  - again aged care and health dominates
  - A few examples of good coordination and cooperation between modes and use of available resources

# Who is missing out?

1. Children and young families
2. Youth
3. Older people in retirement villages
4. Areas in the main town not covered by a route bus
5. People in small towns, farms
6. Those not eligible for CT and CPNs e.g. those on a low income, children, those who want to do a different activity than offered by CT
7. People seeking help with DV, mental health issues, substance abuse

## CHILDREN

- The Riverland Region:
  - 1:4 families with children 0-5 have trouble getting to services for their children (e.g. Maternal and Child Care Nurse)
  - Nurses will not visit the home for ~5% of this group because of safety fears (DV)
- Poor child development in five-year olds. Transport a problem and inconsistent – on school bus? Parents allowed on the bus? Reliance on walking

# Who is missing out?

## Children – the canary in the coalmine

1. The Riverland Region: Maternal and Child Care Nurse
  - 1:4 families have trouble getting to this service due to lack of transport
  - For ~5% of these the nurse will not visit due to safety fears (DV)
2. Mount Gambier and Port Pirie Region: High levels of poor child development
  - Development delays – 2 or more of 5 areas measured
    - Aust – 11.1%
    - Mt Gambier (LGA= town) – 16.7%
    - Wattle Range LGA – 19.6%
    - Port Pirie – 16.4%
    - Peterborough - 23.8%
  - The problem has doubled between 2009 to 2015
    - Why? Transport a problem and inconsistent – on school bus? Parents allowed on the bus? Reliance on walking
    - Low median rents suggest low income people may be attracted to live in the areas, but the trade-off is accessibility difficulties



It takes a village (with transport) to raise a child!

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  1. Physical health & wellbeing
  2. Social competence
  3. Emotional maturity
  4. Language and cognitive skills
  5. Communication skills



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## Directions for PT

- Bus services less frequent in SA (like WA) than found in Vic, Tas. and NSW
- An increase in bus services as a framework for increasing transport options:
- Standards:
  - Town population 3,000-~6,000
    - Hourly service Monday to Friday 9.30am to 2.30pm then 4.30pm to 5.30pm start of last run; Saturday morning 8am to 12pm. Use school buses or community buses at marginal cost
  - Town population ~6,000-~10,000
    - Hourly service; Monday to Friday 7am to 6.30pm start of last run; 8am to 4pm Saturday; 9am to 2pm Sunday. Use low floor route buses complemented by school buses and/or community transport vehicles, including volunteer drivers, for some runs, if needed and feasible, with all vehicles accessible.
  - Town population ~20,000
    - Hourly service, except for 2 or so additional services in both the am and pm peaks; Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm start of last run; Saturday hourly headway 8am to 6pm; Sunday 9am to 4pm. All low floor bus. Additional peak services perhaps by CT or school buses (pm)





## Directions for School bus



- Shift responsibility to Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, SA, from Department for Education and Child Development, SA
- Privatize yellow bus service (state could continue to own vehicles)
- Fill spare capacity on school buses
  - Allocation criteria to be decided locally
- Concerns about child abuse are overblown! Indeed – mixed passengers are likely to be useful to reduce bullying behaviour.

## Directions for CT

- Heavily occupied with older people and medical transport
  - therefore many people not covered by CT in absence of car or PT
- Major concerns about Federal NDIS and MyAgedCare:
  - Progressively rolled out for eligible people with a disability and those over 65 yrs
  - Transport – move from block funding to providers to case-by-case
  - Problems:
    - Financial uncertainty for providers
    - Entry of commercial interests – risk they will ‘cherry-pick’ the profitable runs
    - Funding for the 90% of people with a disability not under the NDIS
    - Those outside My Aged Care – 200 on W/L already in The Riverland
    - CT presently on ST contracts only
  - There is a risk that transport will be even further reduced for those at risk of SE in regional/rural areas

## Integrated approaches

- Establish the Warrnambool Regional Accessibility/ConnectU model
  - Integrate all transport needs rather than mode based – artificial regulations and funding silos
  - Make better use of existing resources to meet more transport currently unmet needs
  - Local understanding of needs, decision-making and resources
- Also need to invest more in PT
  - Lift service densities to more acceptable levels (closer to those in neighbouring Victoria) as the backbone of transport
- This thinking is occurring internationally

“We can take a more integrated approach to all aspects of transport planning ...And we can start realising more of the synergies and savings to be had by breaking down silo thinking ...and by recognising and rewarding the role that transport plays in achieving a wide range of public policy goals.”

“Some initiatives are now being pursued which aim to break down these silos, for example ‘Total Transport’ schemes”

Urban Transport Group 2016 *Policy futures for urban transport*, Leeds, U.K.