

# OMI Transport Consultation Report

September 2010

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) held the second of four consultations scheduled this year on 26 June 2010. The consultation was undertaken in response to the OMI Strategic Plan 2009-2013, as part of a state-wide community engagement strategy.

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate the engagement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in government decision making processes, policies and programs and provide information, skills and opportunities to support settlement integration and citizenship.

OMI invited ethnic community members, service providers and government agencies to participate in the consultation on transport issues for people from CaLD backgrounds.

The transport consultation focused on two areas:

1. Public transport – access and safety; and
2. Obtaining a driver's licence.

Sixty-four people attended the consultation at the Citiplace Community Centre at the Perth train station. Of these, 45 were community members and the remainder were representatives of service provider agencies. The participants were from a range of cultural backgrounds including Burundian, Ethiopian, Guinean, Iraqi, Congolese, Sudanese and Thai.

The consultation was organised in two parts:

Part 1: An information session during which representatives of the Department of Transport and Transperth described the role of their agencies and initiatives they have implemented to assist people from CaLD backgrounds; and

Part 2: A facilitated discussion in small groups of approximately eight participants per group in which OMI sought input on issues affecting people from CaLD backgrounds using public transport and obtaining a driver's licence.

Feedback from participants following the consultation indicated satisfaction with the quality of the presentations and facilitated group discussions.

## Key Issues

### **Public Transport**

The primary concern for participants in relation to public transport related to safety and security. Twenty eight participants (44%) nominated this as one of their two main concerns. Issues highlighted were:

- experiences of verbal harassment;
- experiences of overt or covert behaviour, such as people moving seats to avoid sitting next to a person from a CaLD background;
- tension between people from Indigenous and CaLD backgrounds; and
- inadequacy of video surveillance and other security measures.

Solutions suggested were:

- Increase security and surveillance.
- Increase cultural diversity among security guards.
- More community education about how to summon aid when security is threatened.
- Research into the reasons for conflict between people from Indigenous and CaLD backgrounds.
- Increased cultural awareness among bus drivers, Transperth staff and the general public.

The second main issue in relation to public transport was the cost of public transport and the impact of losing a concession card once in employment. The proposed solution was to raise the threshold at which the concession card is taken away.

The third main issue in relation to public transport was the need for assistance for parents taking prams on buses. Participants highlighted a tendency for bus drivers to be impatient on these occasions.

It was proposed that a person be available on the bus to assist in this event.

### **Driver's Licence**

The primary concern relating to driver's licences was the cost of driving lessons and other associated fees. Participants highlighted the dilemma faced by many: a job is needed in order to earn money to pay for driving lessons; however, a job often requires the applicant to hold a driver's licence. Participants stressed the financial pressures faced by families in meeting rental and other costs and the lack of available funds for driving lessons once other bills have been paid.

The most popular solutions to address this issue were:

- Free-of-charge lessons for eligible persons.
- More subsidised driving programs such as the program delivered by the Edmund Rice Centre, Mirrabooka.
- Introduction of a loan scheme, similar to HECS, to assist people to pay for driving lessons which would be repaid once they are in employment.

The second main issue of concern in relation to driver's licences was communication difficulties when undertaking the practical driving test. The most popular solutions to this issue were:

- Increased cultural awareness among assessors.
- Allow interpreters in the car when undertaking the test or allow the instructor to conduct the test.
- Collect data to determine whether or not some assessors discriminate against people from CaLD backgrounds.

The third main issue of concern in relation to driver's licences was the cost of repeating the practical test. The proposed solution was to subsidise or reduce the fee for the second and subsequent tests.

### **Lessons**

Key lessons identified through this consultation process were:

- the value of ongoing consultations of this nature;
- the importance of locating the venue for the consultations in places accessible by the target audience;
- the importance of using plain English in written and verbal communication; and
- the need to market the consultation to attract a broad representation of CaLD community groups.

In discussions with Transperth and the Department of Transport following the consultation it became clear that the consultation structure does not reliably yield recommendations or solutions which could readily be implemented. The consultations are effective in raising issues and in communicating to government agencies CaLD community perceptions of their services. They are less successful in presenting feasible solutions, at least partly due to the lack of an opportunity for agencies to present the detailed context for their policies and programs, knowledge of which is essential for formulating reforms.

OMI will take these issues on board in its planning for future consultations.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) held the second of four consultations scheduled this year on 26 June 2010. The consultation was undertaken in response to the OMI Strategic Plan 2009-2013, as part of a state-wide community engagement strategy.

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate engagement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds in government decision making processes, policies and programs and provide information, skills and opportunities to support settlement integration and citizenship.

### 1.1 Background

Transport was chosen as a focus for consultation based on feedback from non-government organisations (NGOs) and communities that difficulties accessing transport were a barrier to accessing services and programs. For example, in 2007 the Office of Multicultural Interests funded seven projects through its Community Relations Integration Officer (CRIO) program which aimed to address the lack of awareness amongst CaLD communities, in particular those from new and emerging communities<sup>1</sup>, of services and programs that are available to the broader community.

Four of the seven projects identified that accessing transport was a barrier to accessing services and programs.<sup>2</sup> Two key areas of concern were identified:

1. Public transport – access and safety; and
2. Obtaining a driver's licence.

The transport consultation focused on these areas.

An invitation to participate in the consultation together with a brief discussion paper highlighting some key transport issues for CaLD communities was sent to approximately 260 CaLD community members and representatives from non-government organisations (NGOs) and government agencies.

A discussion paper was posted on the OMI website one month before the consultation. It highlighted key themes and questions in relation to public transport and obtaining a driver's licence.

Myra Cake of Community Initiatives Australia was contracted to facilitate the consultation.

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1 Persons from new and emerging communities, which are defined as those:

- that have been established in Western Australia since 1997;
- whose number have increased significantly since 1997 and which have an ongoing and significant need for government services; and/or
- which do not yet have the resources or numbers to have an established community infrastructure.

Members of these communities are likely to be in need of substantial, targeted government services and advocacy, and are likely to have entered Australia under the Humanitarian Program. In WA these communities include recent arrivals from Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Burundi, Congo, Rwanda, Egypt, Burma, Iraq and Iran.

Note: This definition is adapted from: Queensland. Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Multicultural Affairs Queensland [1999] *New and emerging communities in Queensland: a profile and needs analysis of new and emerging communities in Queensland*.

[http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.asp?file=pdf/3179/74.pdf&str\\_title=False.pdf](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.asp?file=pdf/3179/74.pdf&str_title=False.pdf)

2 Office of Multicultural Interests (June 2009) *Community Relations Integration Officer (CRIO) Program – Internal Evaluation Report* p.29 available at [http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/iiap/CRIO\\_%20Report.pdf](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/iiap/CRIO_%20Report.pdf)

## 1.2 Participants

Sixty-four people attended the consultation at the Citiplace Community Centre at the Perth train station. Of these, 45 were community members and the remainder were representatives of service provider agencies. The participants were from a range of cultural backgrounds including Burundian, Ethiopian, Guinean, Iraqi, Congolese, Sudanese, and Thai.

The following communities and organisations were represented:

### **Community groups:**

Annuak South Sudanese Community in WA, Burundian Community, Congolese Community of WA, Pojulu (South Sudanese) Community, Sudanese Community, Unity of Ethiopians in WA, Thai-Australian Association and West African Women's Group.

### **NGOs, peak bodies and representatives from private industry:**

Australian Asian Association, Communicare, DNA Kingston Training, Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka, Ethnic Youth Advocate of WA, ISHAR Women's Health Centre, Fremantle Multicultural Centre, Mercy Employment and Community Programs - CaLD Workforce Development Centre, Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre, Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre, The Gowrie.

### **Government:**

City of Stirling, Equal Opportunity Commission, Kidsafe WA, Transperth, Department of Transport, Northlake Intensive English Centre and Polytechnic West Adult Migrant English Program.

## 1.3 Consultation Process

The consultation was organised in two parts:

1. An information session during which representatives of the Department of Transport and Transperth described the role of their agencies and initiatives they have implemented to assist people from CaLD backgrounds.
2. Facilitated discussion in small groups of approximately eight participants per group in which OMI sought input on issues affecting people from CaLD backgrounds using public transport and obtaining a driver's licence.

### 1.3.1 Presenters

The consultation began with two ten-minute presentations by the following agency representatives:

- Mr Robert Warburton, representing the Department of Transport, described the role of the Department in relation to driver's licence issues and initiatives that the Department has introduced to assist people from CaLD backgrounds obtain a driver's licence.
- Mr Peter Jones, representing Transperth, described the services provided by his agency.

### 1.3.2 Group Discussion

Following the presentations, participants were seated in small groups (eight to ten participants per table) to discuss in detail key issues in relation to each of the two topics. Each group had a facilitator and scribe who identified the key issues raised by participants at each table. The facilitators were members of the Minister's Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG) or the Ethnic Youth Advocate who were briefed prior to the discussion. OMI staff acted as scribes at each table.

The Consultation focussed on the two key issues:

- i) Public Transport; and
- ii) Driver's Licence.

For each of these key issues, participants were invited to:

- i) identify **issues**, and the associated **impacts** of these; and
- ii) explore **possible solutions**, and how to achieve them, for each issue.

One half of the room began by discussing the first key issue while the other half discussed the second key issue. After 40 minutes, participants were asked to switch topics. This aimed to provide a clear break of thinking so that each topic received its own focus. To report back to the whole group, each table contributed one new item in turn from their list until a comprehensive summary list for each key issue was created. Each participant then voted to prioritise four items, two for each of the two key issues. The tally of these established participants' priority rankings.



## 2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

### 2.1 Introduction

As many people from CaLD communities, in particular refugees and humanitarian entrants, are on very low incomes or benefits,<sup>3</sup> or have difficulty obtaining a driver's licence, they rely on public transport. This makes it difficult to get to workplaces that are not close to existing public transport routes.<sup>4</sup> Access to medical and essential services can also be problematic. Anecdotal evidence has also highlighted difficulties experienced by young people living in areas distant from schools, in particular, schools with Intensive English Centres.

Most people from CaLD backgrounds who have a disability depend on public transport. Depending on the disability, some people are not able to own a motor vehicle and are not able to drive.<sup>5</sup>

The CRIO program identified problems using public transport which included:

- information about how the Transperth system works;
- knowledge about how to plan a journey;
- skills to access and navigate user information (timetables, smart-rider, help lines); and
- costs.<sup>6</sup>

The Gosnells Women's Health Service noted:

*Even when women are aware of a service, they require support to get there the first time. A number of women expressed that they would like to go but don't know where to go or what train/bus to catch.<sup>7</sup>*

Anecdotal evidence also suggested that some people from CaLD backgrounds fear for their safety and security on public transport including in bus stations. However, little is known about the type or frequency of incidents.

Both The Gowrie and the Gosnells Women's Health Service CRIO projects identified that personal and parental fears for safety, especially for women and girls wearing a hijab, were barriers in accessing public transport.

*Muslim mothers (who can be identified easily by their dress code) do not feel safe in taking the bus or waiting at a stop for fear of being abused whether that is verbal or even physically.<sup>8</sup>*

The consultation confirmed that these concerns still exist in the community and raised concerns about other issues. These are detailed below. For the purposes of this report they have been listed based on the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) analytical framework adopted in relation to the rights to adequate housing and food, as well as the work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education. The framework evaluates government services based on their availability, accessibility, affordability, adaptability and acceptability.<sup>9</sup>

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3 Office of Multicultural Interests (June 2009) *Community Relations Integration Officer (CRIO) Program – Internal Evaluation Report* p.29 available at [http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/iiap/CRIO\\_%20Report.pdf](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/iiap/CRIO_%20Report.pdf)

4 Department of Education and Training, Government of Western Australia (2005) *Pathways to Apprenticeships and Traineeships for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*, p.75

5 Written submission from the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre, 18 June 2010

6 Office of Multicultural Interests (2009) *Community Relations Integration Officer (CRIO) Program Evaluation Report*, p.30 accessible at: [http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/iiap/CRIO\\_%20Report.pdf](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/iiap/CRIO_%20Report.pdf)

7 *Ibid*, p.29

8 *Ibid*.

9 See: <http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/MasterFrameView/ae1a0b126d068e868025683c003c8b3b?Opendocument>  
Note that "accessibility" also includes "cultural adequacy".

## 2.2 The Public Transport System

### 2.2.1 Zones

Transperth determines fares by dividing its service areas into zones.

There are nine Transperth zones which are defined by circles centred on Perth city. Fares are calculated by the number of zones travelled through on each journey. For example, travel within one zone requires only a one-zone ticket and travel over the zone boundary into another zone requires a two-zone ticket.

The ticket buys up to three hours of travel on any Transperth bus, train or ferry service. For journeys up to four zones, a person has two hours to transfer between services. For trips covering five to nine zones a person has three hours.

A two section ticket allows travel on short one-way journeys of up to 3.2 kilometres. A person cannot transfer between services with a two section ticket.

Transperth also operates a Free Transit Zone (for buses) and a SmartRider Free Transit Zone (for trains) within the Perth city boundaries.

### 2.2.2 Tickets

Transperth has two types of ticketing:

- i) SmartRider; and
- ii) cash tickets.

Within these broad ticket types there are different categories of fare. The main ones are Standard, Concession and the fifty cent Student fare which is only available with a SmartRider to primary and secondary students. Concession passes are available for students, people with a disability, veterans, seniors, aged pensioners and holders of Health Care Cards. Children under five years of age travel free.

#### i) **SmartRider**

SmartRider is Transperth's electronic ticketing system that uses smartcard technology incorporating an embedded microchip and an aerial to enable the card to communicate with processors located on board Transperth buses and ferries and at train stations.

The embedded microchip stores on the SmartRider card, records journey details and the fare value of each journey to be deducted from the stored value on the card. The most important two things to remember when using the SmartRider are to:

- add value to your card before travel; and
- tag on and tag off.

SmartRider cards cost \$10 for standard and \$5 for concession cards. They can be purchased at any Transperth InfoCentre or authorised SmartRider Retail Sales Outlet. WA Seniors Card Holders and some students may be exempt from the initial card purchase fee.

Once the SmartRider card has been purchased a minimum of \$10 must be added at the time of purchase to allow a person to use Transperth services. This is in addition to the card purchase fee.

A person can add value to the SmartRider by 'Autoload', 'Add-value' machines; BPAY; on board buses and ferries; at Transperth InfoCentres and at authorised SmartRider Retail Outlets.

SmartRider provides either a 15% or 25% discount - depending on the type of add-value method used - as compared with the cost of a cash ticket.

When travelling with a SmartRider it is necessary to 'tag on' at the beginning of the journey and 'tag off' at the end of the journey and at any transfers in between.

ii) **Cash Tickets**

For bus travel, a cash ticket can be bought from the driver. For train services, tickets can be purchased from the Ticket Vending Machines located at all stations. Ferry passengers can either purchase a ticket from the driver or use the TVM located at the jetty.

### 2.2.3 Fines

It is an offence to travel without a valid ticket or 'tagged on' SmartRider.

Most offences incur a \$100 fine. However under some by-laws, an on the spot fine can be up to \$500.

The most widely common infringement notices are for:

- not having a valid ticket (on-the-spot \$100 fine; maximum penalty \$500);
- smoking on a bus, train or at a station (on-the-spot \$100 fine; maximum penalty \$500);
- drinking alcohol on a bus, train or at a station (on-the-spot \$100 fine; maximum penalty \$500);
- causing a nuisance (on-the-spot \$100 fine; maximum penalty \$500);
- obstructing an authorised person (on-the-spot \$200 fine; maximum penalty \$1,000); and
- continuing to travel when travel has been refused (on-the-spot \$200 fine; maximum penalty \$2,000).<sup>10</sup>

Failure to pay an infringement notice within the required time period will lead to the matter being dealt with by the Fines Enforcement Registry which has the power to suspend a person's motor vehicle or driver's licence. Once the infringement process reaches this stage, additional costs may be incurred.

If a person wishes to challenge the notice they can:

- email [fines@pta.wa.gov.au](mailto:fines@pta.wa.gov.au); or
- send a letter of appeal to the Manager of Security and Customer Service.<sup>11</sup>

If a person is unsuccessful in this appeal and wishes to contest the infringement further, this can be done by taking the matter to court.

## 2.3 Transperth Initiatives for CaLD Communities

Transperth currently provides a transport orientation program for migrants, especially newly arrived humanitarian entrants. The program, *Get on Board*, was developed in 2008 as part of The Gowrie's CRIO program. The program includes 'in class' education, delivered by teacher-trained Transperth facilitators, and hands-on 'Station and Facilitator Tours' to provide real experiences, also supported by bilingual workers. the workshops involve an interactive multimedia presentation covering topics such as:

- how to plan a journey on the internet;
- understanding zones and using timetables;
- using customer information telephone lines and interpreter lines;

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<sup>10</sup> This information about Transperth services was obtained from the Transperth website: [www.transperth.wa.gov.au](http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au)

<sup>11</sup> The letter should be sent to PO Box 383, Northbridge WA 6865

- ticketing options including the SmartRider, ticket machines, different types of tickets, concessions and costs and the importance of getting tickets;
- codes of conduct; and
- safety and security.

The final activity is to use maps and timetables to plan a journey using Transperth services (the bus / train and ferry) to reach a destination. Following the workshops, participants are given the opportunity to put the skills they learned into practice by undertaking the journey they planned in class.

An Education Resource Kit containing facilitator notes, DVD and classroom workshop activities is available for all service providers working with CaLD communities including centres delivering the Adult Migrant English Program, migrant resource centres and Intensive English Centres in schools. This allows other agencies to deliver the orientation program.

Other Transperth initiatives aimed at assisting people from CaLD backgrounds access public transport include:

- distributing multilingual posters to promote the use of the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) to contact Transperth;
- translating key 'getting started' Transperth information into eleven languages;
- trialling a free call phone connected to TIS to be located at Wellington Street Bus Station InfoCentre; and
- promoting key Transperth messages on Multicultural Radio Station, 6EBA 95.3FM.

## 2.4 Consultation Issues and Proposals

### 2.4.1 Availability

Consultation participants identified the unavailability of public transport, in particular buses, early in the morning and late at night and the difficulty travelling across suburbs by public transport as a key issue. Several participants cited examples of the difficulties getting to work in suburbs distant from their home because of the lack of buses early in the morning and the fact that it was necessary to travel first to the centre of the city in order to catch a bus or train to a location in another suburb.

The lack of bus services was felt strongly by people from CaLD backgrounds with a disability.

*Most people from CaLD backgrounds with disability live in the outer suburbs due to getting more affordable rental properties. However unfortunately, during business hours the buses to the outer suburbs run on hourly or less frequent basis and after hours - in the evenings, Sundays and on public holidays, some services are not available at all. . As most people from CaLD backgrounds do not have any family or extended family who could support them, they may become immobile in their own homes, not being able to do their food shopping, taking children to their extra curricular activities, participate in their community activities, etc. Teenagers who are not able to drive, may not be able to go and meet their friends on the weekends and may cause problems at home due to boredom.<sup>12</sup>*

The submission from the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre contained several examples of these difficulties.

*As a person with a disability myself, I also fully depend on the public transport to go to work, attend meetings at different venues, to do my daily necessary shopping, to visit my family, etc. I*

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<sup>12</sup> Written submission from the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre, 18 June 2010.

*find it extremely difficult to rely on buses even during business hours, if I had to get out of the CBD area. Last year, I was providing outreach services at the Swan Tafe in Balga one day a week. I had to catch three buses to get to work in Balga from Victoria Park where I live.*

*A mother with a physical disability was told to attend an appointment with a specialist Doctor at the Princess Margaret Hospital. The only way she could take her child to the hospital was by taking public transport. Mother suffers from chronic back pains. Due to her language difficulty, she was not able to find out what buses to catch. One of our advocates found her the information. She had to catch a bus from Ellenbrook (where she lives) to the Midland Train Station, get on the train and change in Perth to the Fremantle train; get off in Subiaco and catch a bus to the Princess Margaret Hospital and do it reverse on her way going home with a sick child.*

*Another client has been semi homeless waiting on the Homeswest's priority list for nearly two years for an accommodation to become available along the trainline as she is unable to catch a bus using a scooter. She can take her scooter on the trains but not buses.*

It was noted that many people from new and emerging communities work in low-skilled jobs which often:

- a) require an early start of between 5.00am to 6.00am when there is a dearth of public transport; and
- b) are located in areas not well serviced by public transport.

Others work late in the night and face difficulties accessing public transport beyond midnight.

*Most new arrivals need to find a job and often are not able to obtain a Drivers Licence immediately. Usually they are seeking factory / cleaning positions etc which start really early. They are severely disadvantaged by not being able to access public transport early in the morning.*

*Some of our clients were offered an employment opportunity in a factory where they manufactured blinds. The work hours were from 6:00 am to 2:00 pm. However, buses started running at 6:30 am, and the nearest bus stop to the factory was about half-an-hour walk away. Although a number of people were keen to apply for the position at the factory, due to lack of transport, they could not.*

*It's such a catchment area in Mirrabooka and yet you can't get bus to closest industrial centre.*

*A young man arrived in Perth as a refugee with no formal education in his own country. He had low vision and was very interested in doing construction work. He went to TAFE and completed a course in brick-laying. He had enough sight to do construction work but not enough to be able to drive. With construction work, he was required to work at different places. However due to lack of public transport or having to catch multiple transport to get to different workplaces, he was not able to pursue his career in the construction industry.*

One participant, representing an NGO, related the difficulties faced by one of her clients travelling from a northern to an eastern suburb for work:

*One of my clients was working at a grain factory in Welshpool/Kewdale and he was living in Balga / Girrawheen. He left home at 4.45am to walk to Mirrabooka, then got a bus to the city to catch a train, then he would walk a certain distance to get to work. When I spoke to him about it he said "I used to walk for hours for water. I can do this for my family.*

Participants also cited choice of the location for the consultation as an example of transport difficulties encountered. OMI chose Citiplace Community Centre because of its central location and proximity to the Perth Train Station. However, participants noted that, as the consultation was conducted on a Saturday afternoon, bus and train services were less frequent than week-days and this made attendance difficult.

*It's hard to get transport to come to the city from Mirrabooka / Ballajura.*

**Solutions** suggested to address these issues included:

- extending service times, including running buses at earlier times and increasing frequency both during and outside business hours;

- establishing bus routes that not only run into the centre of the city but across suburbs; and
- having more driver training courses available at low cost to enable people to get a driver's licence quickly and easily and reduce dependence on public transport (see section 2.2).

#### 2.4.2 Accessibility

Lack of understanding of the transport system was identified as a major barrier to accessing public transport. This could result in people overpaying for tickets, not accessing SmartRider at the cheapest rate and fines for travelling without the correct ticket. The most common concern was in relation to the SmartRider system including the requirement to 'tag on' and 'tag off'.

Some participants admitted that they did not know how to purchase a SmartRider:

*I don't know the process of getting one. Is it available to everyone?*

Others expressed confusion about the zoning system.

*I look around and I think how many zones do I need and I look around for someone to ask and I ask the man next to me and he doesn't know.*

*I want to approach someone who is friendly and understanding.*

Some participants found it difficult to understand timetables, in particular, those located at bus stands. Vandalism at bus stands could make reading timetables even more difficult.

Access to information could be adversely impacted by:

- language barriers; and
- the fact that agencies tended to rely on the internet, which is not accessed by many people from new and emerging communities, to communicate information.

Some participants expressed concern that lack of understanding of the transport system could result in fines.

*People don't understand system because English is still a problem. People get the wrong ticket and get fined for a mistake that wasn't fair – can't even be educated in the first six months and they don't understand what the fine is and so they sit on it and they get a reminder and they don't understand and they don't understand the men that comes to talk to them...They don't know what this is, so they throw it in the bin and then the man comes knock knock knock and they get fined.*

Concerns were expressed regarding the increasing number of people from CaLD backgrounds receiving fines. It was noted that most are not confident to explain or challenge inspectors when a fine is issued and that people are not aware that an appeal process exists or how to lodge an appeal.

**Solutions** suggested to address these issues included:

##### **SmartRiders**

- Simplified User Guides for SmartRiders.
- Providing an information brochure about SmartRiders when they are issued.
- Ensuring newsagents have and provide accurate information about the use of SmartRiders at point of sale.
- Providing information sessions about the use of SmartRiders at community organisations such as the Edmund Rice Centre in Mirrabooka.
- Encouraging participation in Transperth's 'Get on Board' program.

##### **Understanding Zones and Fares**

- Posters to explain zones and fares.

- Recruitment of liaison and security guards from different cultural backgrounds who will assist customers with their queries.

#### **Understanding Timetables**

- Frequent checks on bus stands to identify graffiti and other acts of vandalism.
- Making it clearer which timetable is for train services and which is for bus services.
- Translating timetables into common languages.
- Someone to explain / provide an orientation on how to use timetables.

#### **Access to Information**

- Translation of information.
- Provision of information through churches, mosques, community centres and at community events.
- Provision of information about the process and other transport information to be provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Department of Education on arrival.
- Engaging volunteers in the community and hosting workshops to explain the process.

#### **Fines**

- Inspectors to give people an option to properly explain a ticketing breach (not just issue the fine).
- Providing a warning first, followed by a fine if the offence is repeated.
- Provision of information about the appeal process.
- Provision of a card, similar to the Western Australian Interpreter Card, which identifies a person who may need assistance to understand the transport system.
- Include a statement in different languages on an infringement notice referring a person to assistance if they do not understand the meaning of the notice.

### **2.4.3 Affordability**

Participants commented that public transport can be costly for people who do not hold a concession card. This was particularly the case for people on low incomes whose wages might not be much more than Centrelink payments.

*People who work hard are punished. When people struggle and get a job and ... lose their concession cards, public transport becomes very expensive!...This encourages people to question 'Why am I working so hard?' This is especially a problem when earnings are not that much more than the Centrelink payment. They can actually be worse off.*

**Solutions** to address this included:

- Reduced fares.<sup>13</sup>
- Broadening eligibility for concessions.<sup>14</sup>

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13 Transperth notes that public transport is already heavily subsidised by the government: approximately 70 per cent of the travel cost.

14 A range of concessions are provided by Transperth including for holders of Health Care Cards and their dependants. Low Income Health Care Cards are also available for those who meet the Low Income Health Care Card income test. Maximum gross income for a single person with no children is \$459; for a single or couple with one child it is \$798 (for each additional child add \$34) and for a couple with no children it is \$764. See: [www.transperth.wa.gov.au/TicketsandFares/ConcessionPasses/tabid/112/Default.aspx#Health](http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/TicketsandFares/ConcessionPasses/tabid/112/Default.aspx#Health)

#### 2.4.4 Adaptability

Participants noted difficulties faced by parents taking a pram on buses. Concerns related to bus drivers' lack of patience and reluctance to assist, and difficulties finding space on buses at peak periods.

**Solutions** proposed to address these issues were:

- Introduction of new buses by Transperth which will be 'low-floor' and designed for increased accessibility.
- Customer service training for bus drivers. (It was noted that bus drivers are not required to assist.)

#### 2.4.5 Acceptability

Participants' main concerns with the public transport system related to safety and security. Issues included:

- discrimination/racial harassment by bus drivers, security personnel, passengers and passers-by;
- witnessing or experiencing physical or verbal abuse; and
- incivility and resultant feelings of insecurity.

Specific incidents cited included:

- unpleasant interactions between bus drivers and passengers who were tourists or newly-arrived migrants and refugees;
- personal harassment (on the Fremantle/Spearwood bus line);
- verbal aggression and arguments between Indigenous people and migrants;
- fear of attack and racial abuse particularly in stations and access paths that are not well lit, such as at Cannington;
- other passengers moving away to avoid CaLD fellow passengers; and
- drivers verbally abusing people as they wait for buses.

Participants also expressed concerns regarding the conduct of security personnel, questioning whether staff received cross-cultural training and noting that it is "one thing to train, but another to practise". It was noted that surveillance equipment is visible but questioned whether it was always in use.

Participants also commented on the need for more bus stops with shelters against sun and rain.

**Solutions** proposed included:

- Customer service training for drivers and security personnel.<sup>15</sup>
- Increase the diversity of security personnel.
- Provide an orientation, provided by interpreters, that includes how to use emergency buttons.
- Provide visual displays illustrating what to do in an emergency.
- Improve lighting at and around bus and train stations.<sup>16</sup>
- Address tensions between people from Indigenous and CaLD backgrounds through partnerships.

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15 Transperth has advised that all drivers do receive customer service training. In the event of discrimination, Transperth suggests the passenger contact the Commentline.

16 Transperth is responsible only for lighting at station precincts and not on surrounding access roads and footpaths.



## 2.5 Priority Issues and Suggestions

The top three priority issues and suggestions identified by participants are listed below.

### 2.5.1 Safety and Security

The primary concern for participants in relation to public transport related to safety and security. Twenty-eight participants (44%) nominated this as one of their two main concerns. Issues highlighted were:

- experiences of verbal harassment;
- experiences of overt or covert behaviour, such as people moving seats to avoid sitting next to a person from a CaLD background;
- tension between people from Indigenous and CaLD backgrounds; and
- inadequacy of video surveillance and other security measures.

**Solutions** suggested were:

- Increase security and surveillance.<sup>17</sup>
- Have different cultures represented among security guards,
- More community education for when security is threatened, such as duress buttons and signs showing how to use them.
- Research into the reasons for conflict between people from Indigenous and CaLD backgrounds.
- Education of bus drivers, Transperth staff and the general public in relation to the positive contribution of migrant communities to Western Australia.

### 2.5.2 Concession Cards

Twelve (19%) participants identified the cost of public transport as one of their two issues of most concern in relation to public transport. The main issue was the impact of losing a concession card once in employment, regardless of the salary earned. Participants indicated that, even if a job pays the same or little more than a benefit, the concession is lost.

The proposed solution was to raise the threshold at which the concession card is taken away.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.5.3 Assistance with Prams

Nine (14%) participants identified the need for assistance for parents taking prams on buses as one of the two most important issues. Participants highlighted a tendency for bus drivers to be impatient on these occasions.

It was proposed that a person be available on the bus to assist in this event.<sup>19</sup>

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17 Transperth is funded to provide significant levels of security and surveillance. Transperth has advised that, while funding for higher service levels is unlikely to be approved, specific information regarding service gaps would be followed up.

18 As noted in Section 2.4.3, low-paid workers may be eligible for a Low Income Health Care Card.

19 Transperth advises that this would carry a significant cost in the order of \$100 million per annum and that this assistance does not occur in other countries. However, should Transperth be provided with specific examples of

### 3. DRIVER'S LICENCE

#### 3.1 Introduction

Obtaining a driver's licence is critical for newly arrived migrants and refugees. A driver's licence is an essential requirement for employment in many occupations. In a tight housing market, people from new and emerging communities are often forced to live further away from city centres and subsequently distant from services including shops, schools, medical assistance and social supports.

Of concern is the number of people, in particular, African humanitarian entrants, who drive without a licence due to difficulties obtaining one. The impact is not only an increasing presence of less-skilled drivers on the road and a danger to the lives of others, but also a cost to the criminal justice system through fines and court appearances. There is a subsequent risk of increased financial burdens for people already struggling to achieve financial independence in a new country.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a range of barriers exist that prevent people from CaLD backgrounds obtaining and keeping their driver's licence. These include:

1. **Pre-Test Knowledge** - Awareness of the need, or process by which to obtain, a licence.
2. **Learner Permit Theory Test** - Literacy levels may pose a challenge to passing and computer-based multiple choice questions are sometimes confusing to CaLD clients.
3. **Driving Lessons** - High cost of lessons and large number of lessons<sup>20</sup> required by many CaLD clients, particularly those from some African countries, and difficulty communicating with driving instructors. Only a limited number of driving instructors come from new and emerging communities and/or speak languages other than English;
4. **Communication with Assessors** during practical driving assessments;
5. **Supervised Driving** – Availability of drivers to assist. (A supervisor must have had their driver's licence for at least four years which means that supervisors must often come from outside clients' own communities.)
6. **Practical Driving Assessment** - Some clients have difficulty communicating with assessors.
7. **Hazard Perception Test (HPT)** - Understanding the computer-based HPT.
8. **Prior Driving Habits** – Adapting to new/Australian driving standards.

Little is known of the impact of these difficulties including:

- the extent to which people from CaLD backgrounds drive without a current driver's licence including reasons for any unlicensed driving, such as lack of awareness of legal requirements or other motivating factors;
- the extent to which people from CaLD backgrounds are involved in traffic violations including the nature of offences and whether or not the person held a driver's licence and the nature of the licence (such as an overseas licence, WA driver's licence or Learner's Permit); or
- the extent to which people from CaLD backgrounds are involved in traffic accidents, including the type of crash (for example, head on, run off road, side impact, rear impact) and whether or not the person held a driver's licence and the nature of the licence of the person involved in the crash (e.g. overseas licence, WA licence, Learner's Permit).

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situations in which drivers did not wait for passengers with prams to be seated before the bus moved off, the matter would be raised with bus operators.

20 Edmund Rice Centre, Mirrabooka reports that, while its program subsidises 35 lessons, some people require between 50 and 60 lessons.

WA Police do not collect CaLD data on persons given a traffic infringement or those involved in traffic accidents<sup>21</sup>.

## 3.2 Steps to Getting a Driver's Licence

There are six steps to getting a driver's licence<sup>22</sup>:

### 1. Get a Learner's Permit

To get a Learner's Permit a person must:

- pass a theory test on the road rules;
- take their Birth Certificate, passport, visa or citizenship certificate for identification;
- take a Healthcare card, Medicare card or bank card and documents to show a person's signature and current address;
- pay a fee (\$17.40) for the theory test which must be paid each time the test is taken<sup>23</sup>; and
- if the test is passed, pay a fee (\$68.30) which also pays for one practical driving test.<sup>24</sup>

### 2. Learn to Drive

A person can learn to drive with any person who has had a licence of the same class for at least four years. A person must carry the learner's permit and have L plates on the car when they are learning to drive.

### 3. Pass a Practical Test

To do the practical test a person must be at least 16 years and six months old. A fee (\$71.80) must be paid for subsequent times a person does the test. The test lasts about 35 minutes. The assessor will provide feedback about the test when it is completed. This takes about 10 minutes.

During the practical driving assessment, the assessor will compare performance to that described in the Department of Transport Driver Licensing Competency Standard. To pass the driving assessment a person must have made significant progress towards meeting the Competency Standard.

The items against which driving is assessed are:

- **Flow** - how well driving skills are combined;
- **Movement** - whether the car is driven move smoothly forwards or backwards;
- **Path** - whether the best track is chosen and the car stays on track;
- **Responsiveness** - whether the driver is aware of hazards around them and responds to them appropriately;
- **Look Behind** - whether the driver keeps an eye on what is happening behind and around them as they drive;
- **Signal** - whether the driver lets other road users know what they intend to do; and
- **Vehicle Management** - whether the driver does things like keeping an eye on the vehicle's instruments while driving.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Email advice from WA Police, 23 February 2009.

<sup>22</sup> This is for car licence applicants only and not for people who hold an overseas driver's licence. Note that there are also different requirements for applicants for a moped licence.

<sup>23</sup> This fee is payable where the test is conducted by Department of Transport

<sup>24</sup> For information about fees associated with getting a driver's licence go to:  
[www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/LBU\\_Fees\\_DriversLicences.pdf](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/LBU_Fees_DriversLicences.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> *How to Pass Your Driving Assessment – a Candidate's Guide to the Practical Driving Assessment* Accessed at:  
[www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/LBU\\_DL\\_B\\_PDA\\_\(2\).pdf](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/LBU_DL_B_PDA_(2).pdf)

A person will automatically fail the practical driving assessment if they:

- disobey a regulatory sign;
- speed;
- disobey any traffic regulation that immediately or potentially threatens safety;
- drive without wearing your seat belt;
- fail to respond to a crisis or potential crisis that would normally be anticipated by an experienced driver;
- cause a crisis or potential crisis;
- refuse to attempt any part of the assessment; or
- refuse to follow a reasonable direction given by the assessor.

A person will also automatically fail if the assessor has to intervene or give assistance to avoid a potentially dangerous situation.

The assessor will not proceed with an assessment if:

- in the judgment of the assessor, the person is not mentally or physically fit for the assessment;
- the vehicle is not roadworthy;
- the vehicle is not appropriate for the class or type of licence assessment;
- the vehicle does not have a centrally positioned handbrake, or dual controls (metro only);
- the vehicle breaks down during the assessment;
- the person offers a bribe or inducement; or
- in the judgment of the assessor, something that would not normally be present during a test adversely affects the authenticity, fairness, reliability or validity of the assessment.<sup>26</sup>

#### **4. Complete a Log Book**

When the practical test has been passed the person must pay (\$18.40) for a log book which must be completed to show that the person has completed at least 25 hours of supervised driving. To be a supervisor, a person must have held a driver's licence for at least four years.<sup>27</sup>

Each session must be recorded, signed and witnessed. L plates must still be on the car.

#### **5. Pass a Hazard Perception Test**

A person must complete a computerised test to see whether they can deal with different traffic situations and make safe driving decisions. Six months must elapse after passing the Practical Driving Assessment before the Hazard Perception Test (HPT) may be undertaken.

A fee must be paid to sit the test. A person must be at least 17 years of age to sit the test.

#### **6. Get the Licence**

To get a licence a person must:

- have successfully passed the HPT; and
- take the completed supervised driving log book and identification to a licensing centre or licensing agent;

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26 *How to Pass Your Driving Assessment – a Candidate's Guide to the Practical Driving Assessment* Accessed at: [www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/LBU\\_DL\\_B\\_PDA\\_\(2\).pdf](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/LBU_DL_B_PDA_(2).pdf)

27 In the case of riding a moped, this is two years. See [www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing/20622.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing/20622.asp)

- have their photo taken for the licence.
- pay a fee (\$36.60) for the licence.

A person will be issued with a provisional licence ('P plates') if they have not previously held a valid licence (issued in either Western Australia or another state or country) for an aggregate period of two (2) years or is younger than 19.

### 3.3 Transferring an Overseas Driver's Licence

If a person holds an overseas driver's licence and plans to live in Western Australia they must apply for a WA driver's licence. However, transferring an overseas driver's licence reduces some of the requirements. To transfer an overseas driver's licence a person must:

- **Find out if their current overseas driver's licence is from a recognised country**

If a person holds a driver's licence from a 'recognised country' and the licence has not expired by more than 12 months, they may be exempt from some requirements.

Recognised countries include Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guernsey, Ireland, Isle of Man,<sup>28</sup> Italy, Japan, Jersey, Luxembourg, Malta,<sup>29</sup> Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.

- **Undertake any necessary tests**

Depending on where the overseas driver's licence was obtained, a person may be required to take tests such as an eyesight test, road rules theory test or practical driving assessment.

- **Apply for a Western Australian driver's licence and provide a photograph**

A person must provide:

- Current overseas driver's licence
- Proof of identity
- Proof of their WA residential address
- One document that shows their signature
- The application fee.

If the overseas licence is not in English an official translation must be provided together with the original overseas driver's licence. Translations of overseas driver's licences are accepted from:

- accredited translators;
- official consulates; and
- the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (in special circumstances only).

The person's photograph will be taken at the licensing centre.

If a person has not held their overseas driver's licence for more than two years or is under the age of 19 years, they will be issued with a provisional licence (P plates). The new driver's licence will show when the provisional driving period ends.

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28 Only recognised if the Isle of Man licence was issued on or after 1 November 1991. See [www.dpi.wa.gov.au/licensing/20669.asp](http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/licensing/20669.asp)

29 Only recognised if the Malta licence was issued on or after 2 January 2004. See [www.dpi.wa.gov.au/licensing/20669.asp](http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/licensing/20669.asp)

### 3.4 Driver's Licence Initiatives for CaLD Communities

In August 2006 the City of Stirling convened a Reference Group to address increasing incidents of migrants within the City not abiding by the law when on the road, focusing on child restraints and driver licensing issues. Recognising that the outcomes of the Reference Group have application state-wide, in September 2008 the Terms of Reference were reviewed, membership extended to relevant organisations outside the City of Stirling, and responsibility for chairing and convening meetings transferred to the Department of Transport (Transport).

The purpose of the Reference Group is to address the barriers faced by people from CaLD backgrounds in obtaining and keeping their driver's licence, without compromising road safety. Its role is to:

- identify the barriers faced by people from CaLD backgrounds in obtaining and keeping their driver's licence;
- identify options and implement strategies to address these barriers;
- monitor and evaluate the strategies; and
- disseminate relevant information to CaLD communities.

Initiatives undertaken by Transport to address these issues include production of four flyers, two of which have been translated into 11 languages, distributed throughout CaLD communities and placed on Transport's website. Two flyers, one targeting people who already hold an overseas licence and the other targeting novice drivers, outline key information about the drivers licence laws and the steps in the process to acquiring a driver's licence. A third flyer aims to raise awareness of learner driver rules (such as having another licensed driver in the car) and the fourth aims to raise awareness of the rules for P plate drivers.

Development and implementation of further strategies and initiatives is constrained by a lack of empirical evidence about the issues involved and the interventions which would assist.

Other community initiatives include:

- A driver's licence training program run by the Edmund Rice Centre (ERC), Mirrabooka and funded through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Settlement Grants Program. The project provides subsidised places for driver training which includes practical driving lessons, preparatory theory courses and supervised driving and log book completion. Each year, the project also makes available five places to suitable clients who have held a driver's licence for three years to complete an intensive ten day course (at a subsidised cost) to obtain a Certificate IV that will qualify them to be a driving instructor.
- The Edmund Rice Centre Youth Leadership Group ran a program to help newly arrived adults obtain their Learners Permit. This was conducted on a voluntary basis by members of the Edmund Rice Centre Youth Leadership Group.

The project involved delivery of the Keys for Life road safety program, developed by the WA School Drug Education and Road Aware (SDERA) program to participants with a good level of English proficiency. Those who had difficulties with English were assisted individually by Youth Leaders. The Leaders underwent three sessions of training prior to delivering the program. On completion of the program participants were invited to take their Learner's Permit Theory Test at the Edmund Rice Centre. A total of 13 people passed the test including six of the Youth Leaders who helped deliver the program.

- The Fremantle Multicultural Centre (FMC) received funding from OMI in 2008 for a project to help clients get their Learners Permit, provide driving lessons and mentoring, and complete the required 25 hours of supervised driving practice. Funding was limited to six months. The Fremantle Multicultural Centre also reported that its program was fully subscribed and was unable to meet the demand for assistance.

## 3.5 Consultation Issues and Proposals

### 3.5.1 Learning to Drive

The key concerns raised by participants in relation to learning to drive were:

- the cost of lessons;
- lack of supervisors to assist completing the required 25 hours supervised driving for the log book;
- difficulty understanding the DriveSafe handbook; and
- difficulty understanding driving instructors.

Participants remarked on the high cost of driving lessons. This was exacerbated by the fact that most CaLD learners require a higher than average number of lessons (30 lessons is common) and that many are on low incomes or unemployed.

*Bills take everything...Don't leave any money for driver's licence.*

*With no work it is hard to pay for driving licence.*

*We accept as a fact that coming to a new country you need to practise so you can get used to the rules and get brave enough to drive here. You do need 20 or 30 lessons.*

*...if you take a few lessons and then run out of money your skills drop off by the time you have any money to take more. This makes it very expensive and pushes out the number of lessons needed.*

One person used the term 'Catch 22' to capture the dilemma faced by communities: a job is needed in order to earn money to pay for a driver's licence; however, a job often requires the applicant to hold a driver's licence, either as a condition of the position or as a means of reaching work due to lack of public transport.

Many participants were aware of a CaLD driver's licence program run by the Edmund Rice Centre in Mirrabooka and believed that more such programs are required in other suburbs.

It was also noted that it is sometimes people resort to paying a person to fulfil the role of supervisor in order for a person to accumulate the required 25 hours for their log book<sup>30</sup>.

Other issues noted in relation to learning to drive were difficulties understanding the DriveSafe handbook, noting that it is neither translated nor written in simple English. Participants also noted that it is sometimes difficult to understand driving instructors and that the quality of driving instructors varies.

*Unscrupulous driving instructors who are not good at teaching CaLD but [are] happy to take \$\$ for endless lessons.*

Participants indicated that it is not uncommon for people from CaLD communities to drive without a licence in order to get to and from work or to respond to family needs and emergencies.

Difficulties understanding the computerised road rules theory test were also noted. Many people were not aware of the option of oral testing.

**Solutions** suggested were:

- More driver education programs such as that delivered by the Edmund Rice Centre, Mirrabooka.
- Subsidised driving lessons based on Health Care cards.

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<sup>30</sup> Department of Transport advise that a person who receives money, reward or another remuneration for teaching another person how to drive a motor vehicle must hold a driving instructor's licence.

- Subsidies for mainstream driving schools to provide specialist CaLD support and programs.
- Free-of-charge learning, similar to the free 510 hours of English language training available through the Adult Migrant English Program.
- Loans such as HECS that can be repaid once a person is working.
- Networking with fellow migrants to make contact with people who are willing to assist with supervised driving.
- Increased availability of instructors who speak different languages.
- Making a list of multicultural driving instructors available to the community as a resource.
- Increased scrutiny and quality control over driving schools including development of a standard 'curriculum' detailing what should be taught / learned by a certain number of lessons.
- Writing the DriveSafe handbook in simple English.
- Making oral testing more widely available.

### 3.5.2 Practical Driving Test

The second key area of concern was the practical driving test. Concerns regarding the assessment process related to:

- difficulty understanding assessors' accent;
- confusion resulting from assessors' use of acronyms and abbreviations; and
- clients' lack of proficiency in the English language.

*Many community members might go eight to ten times for a test but never pass – could be about language...many community members never went to school let alone speak English well enough.*

Some participants suggested that cultural differences could impact on communication. For example, in Sudanese culture, it is not polite to look into a person's eyes; whereas, in Australian culture looking someone directly in the eyes suggests confidence and trust. It was suggested that this could directly or indirectly influence an assessor's judgement of a person during the test.

Participants also noted that fear and nervousness could not only impact on the success with which a person carried out the requirements of the test but also influence the nature of the interaction between assessor and client which could impact on the result.

*Languages... Knowing you have the right to ask examiner / teacher to stop and repeat. But many don't know and become scared.*

*Examiners at practical test can be really picky; take into account nerves. A lot of people fail a lot of times.*

Concerns were raised that some assessors might discriminate against people from CaLD backgrounds. However, this perception could not be substantiated.

Other concerns related to:

- lack of feedback following the test about the reasons for failing;
- the frequency of failure and subsequent costs of re-sitting the test; and
- the number and accessibility of licensing centres.

**Solutions** suggested were:

- Cultural awareness training for assessors.
- Allowing an instructor or interpreter in the car when undertaking the practical test.



- More comprehensive feedback following a test.
- Collect data to determine whether or not some assessors discriminate against people from CaLD backgrounds.

### 3.5.3 Overseas Driver's Licences

It was noted that most of the countries from which consultation participants came were not recognised by the Department of Transport for transfer to a Western Australian licence. It was noted that if these countries were included, this would reduce the requirements faced by many people from new and emerging communities in obtaining a driver's licence in Western Australia. The proposed solution was to reconsider the list of countries eligible for transfer to a Western Australian driver's licence.

## 3.6 Priority Issues

The three priority issues relating to driver's licences were as follows.

### 3.6.1 Cost of Learning to Drive

Twenty three participants (36%) cited the cost of driving lessons and other associated fees as their main concern. Participants highlighted the dilemma faced by many: a job is needed in order to earn money to pay for a driver's licence; however, a job often requires the applicant to hold a driver's licence. Participants stressed the financial pressures faced by families in meeting rental and other costs and the lack of available funds for driving lessons once other bills are paid.

The most popular solutions to address this issue were:

- Free-of-charge lessons for eligible persons (seven participants - 11%).
- More subsidised driving programs such as the program delivered by the Edmund Rice Centre, Mirrabooka (four participants - 6%).
- Introduction of a loan scheme, similar to HECS, to assist people to pay for driving lessons which would be repaid once they are in employment (three participants - 5%).

### 3.6.2 Undertaking the Practical Driving Test

Fourteen participants (22%) highlighted the need for strategies to reduce communication difficulties when undertaking the practical driving test.

The most popular solutions to this issue were:

- Increased cultural awareness among assessors (seven participants - 11%).
- Allow interpreters in the car when undertaking the test or allow the instructor to conduct the test (seven participants - 11%).
- Collect data to determine whether or not some assessors discriminate against people from CaLD backgrounds (three participants - 5%).

### 3.6.3 Cost of Repeating Tests

Nine participants (14%) identified the cost of repeating tests as their main issue of concern regarding obtaining a driver's licence. The proposed solution was to subsidise or reduce the fee for the second and subsequent tests.

## 4. THEMES AND LESSONS

### 4.1 Themes

In summarising the outcomes of the consultation, the facilitator Myra Cake identified two over-arching themes.

*Two cycles of frustration kept emerging - one relating to 'newness to circumstances' and one relating to 'issues and challenges'.*

- 1) *The cycle of 'newness' to circumstances (involving new language, and a lack of understanding of systems), presents a challenge for anyone to encounter and the resulting frustrations can mount and add further pressure.*

*It is considered that simple, well-placed information, and the presence of caring, understanding people could transform the process.*

- 2) *The cycle of **issues / challenges** once broken can lead to a cycle of growth and development.*

- a. *For example, someone needs a driver's licence or public transport to get to a job. The job is needed to get the money, to buy the food, to generate the money to do things like paying for driving lessons and driving tests!!*

- b. *If someone could intercept the cycle by reducing the hurdles or the cost and frustration of not being able to get the driver's licence, then the job could be achieved, the money earned and invested more productively in the family and community.*

*If the negative cycles were transformed into positive experiences, through an integrated and creative process of planning, new ways of thinking and working could evolve for both the service agencies and for the new arrivals themselves.*

*Central to breaking these cycles is the concept of developing a positive public media focus, focussing on the valuable contributions migrants have and are making to this country, and identifying associated examples of success.*

*Other specific responses include[s] Cultural Awareness Training for people involved in servicing people from CaLD backgrounds, and more effective information for the community members themselves.*

Comments on this observation are welcome and may be made through the OMI website: [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au) or by email to: [harmony@omi.wa.gov.au](mailto:harmony@omi.wa.gov.au).

### 4.2 Evaluation

Following the consultation, participants were asked to provide feedback on the presentations, quality of discussion and overall organisation. Thirty-seven participants (58%) completed the questionnaire.

Thirty-two respondents (88%) considered the presentations to be good or excellent.

Thirty-three respondents (89%) found the discussion relevant and the same number believed their views were heard.

Thirty-six respondents (97%) valued the consultation program as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Comments included:

*Genuine concern – well established via delivery of forums – look forward to the outcome?*

*Excellent to bring people together to get their ideas.*

*It really is good to know that important issues for CaLD communities are being given attention from the government agencies.*

*Excellent overall, especially the focus on identifying solutions.*

*Thank you. Excellent, productive seminar.*

Qualitative feedback indicated that key areas for improvement related to the language used by facilitators and presenters and the choice of location for consultations. Comments included:

*Presenters and facilitator spoke too quickly with terms used not familiar to most people.*

*Use less jargon.*

*A bit 'wordy' for participants with more limited English. Powerpoint presentations mostly OK – some had too much text. Transperth had a bit too much 'advertising' and promotion.*

*Mirrabooka will be the best place – Herb Graham Recreation centre – you have more CaLD people in that area.*

*Lower numbers attended from communities than previous employment consultation in Mirrabooka – believe this is due to location – many people will not / do not know how to come to the city – believe local sessions may have better attendance.*

However, one participant expressed support for the choice of venue.

*The venue is very good in that it is being held at the place where I can easily access. In other words, the venue should be close to public transport.*

Participants identified a range of topics for future consultations including:

*How to get information out to the community.*

*Linking the ethnic community with the Indigenous community.*

*Cultural diversity in the community; educating community through positive marketing exposure into the broader community.*

*Health services; public housing; education.*

*English; reading; health; school.*

*Housing; education; child care and parenting.*

*Employment of trained professionals from a CaLD background.*

One participant also drew attention to the lack of diversity in attendance at the consultation and the need to reach out to a greater cross section of the CaLD community.

*It appears that these consultations are not being marketed through appropriate channels. There was very little diversity (less than the employment one). We need to get the views of international students and middle eastern communities.*

### 4.3 Lessons

Key lessons identified through this consultation process were:

- the value of ongoing consultations of this nature;
- the importance of locating the venue for the consultations in places accessible by the target audience;
- the importance of using plain English in written and verbal communication; and
- the need to market the consultation to attract a broad representation of CaLD community groups.

In discussions with Transperth and the Department of Transport following the consultation it became clear that the consultation structure does not reliably yield recommendations or solutions which could readily be implemented. The consultations are effective in raising issues and in communicating to government agencies CaLD community perceptions of their services. They are less successful in

presenting feasible solutions, at least partly due to the lack of an opportunity for agencies to present the detailed context for their policies and programs, knowledge of which is essential for formulating reforms.

An example emerged during the consultations. Participants were critical of bus drivers failing to wait for passengers they should have been able to see running for the bus. Fortunately, Transperth staff attending the consultation were able to explain that drivers are kept to a strict timetable, forfeiting \$300 each time they miss a timed stop by more than five minutes. This context enabled CaLD participants to appreciate the constraints affecting drivers' behaviour.

By the same token, direct discussions with CaLD participants should have enhanced agencies' understanding of the difficulties faced by some CaLD community members in accessing information, understanding expectations and procedures and voicing and proceeding with complaints about their treatment when the mainstream mechanisms provided can be so foreign and unfamiliar.

Further instances of the inadequacy of the process to develop feasible recommendations have emerged since the consultation. A large number of participants were critical of the 'fare hikes' attendant upon loss of the Health Care Card entitling holders to a concession fare. Participants believed that the concession entitlement is forfeited once the holder gains employment, regardless of the salary earned and even if the job pays the same or little more than a pension or benefit. Transperth has since highlighted the availability of a concession for low income earners and their dependants. Transperth has also advised that public transport is already heavily subsidised by government in WA: approximately 70% of the actual cost of providing the service comes from the government subsidy. In this context, it is clear that raising fare concessions further as proposed by several consultation participants, could have significant implications for the viability of the network and at the very least would require a government determination. It is not something Transperth can deliver.

Another criticism made by some participants related to the refusal of bus drivers to assist passengers lift prams onto the bus. If drivers cannot be expected to help, it was suggested, a conductor should be employed to do this task. The lack of help is a significant accessibility as well as safety issue for some women and their small children. The provision of a second staff member on every bus *in case* a passenger should need assistance of this kind, however, is clearly uneconomical. Transperth estimates this suggestion would cost in the order of \$100 million a year. Moreover, the planned roll-out of low floor accessible buses across the fleet will progressively make every bus accessible to prams as well as wheelchairs.

In the context of driver's licences, similar issues arose. Participants quite strongly argued for the support of an interpreter during the practical driving test, citing the candidate's nervousness and the assessor's accent and use of jargon in support of this as an equity measure. The Department of Transport has highlighted, however, that safety reasons may, in this situation, override equity concerns. For example, the reaction time between the assessor's instruction and its relay to the candidate by an interpreter may be too long and the presence of the interpreter may be a dangerous distraction to the driver.

These examples, illustrate the importance of in-depth dialogue about context and objectives to a genuine negotiation of solutions. As Transperth's Peter Jones noted:

*...the comments are too general and there was no opportunity to put context around the issues and solutions and some don't make sense from what I know to be the case. A bit more drilling down is required to understand the exact nature of the problems and the solutions should then be targeted from there.*

*To make the exercise more meaningful, maybe you should reconvene a focus group to tease out the exact nature of the issues that have been reported.<sup>31</sup>*

OMI will take these issues on board in its planning for future consultations.

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31 Email dated 31 August 2010.