

EXPLORING TRANSPORT DISADVANTAGE WITH REGARDS TO THE AGEING POPULATION OF REGIONAL AND RURAL QUEENSLAND

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1. OVERVIEW

➤ WHAT IS TRANSPORT DISADVANTAGE (TD)?

A lack of access to transport services and opportunities which can potentially lead to poor quality of life and well-being.

➤ WHY AUSTRALIA?

Majority of residents are extremely car dependent. This is the result of decades of car-centric planning and urban sprawl which facilitate car dependency. This makes it difficult to support robust public transportation.

➤ WHY AGEING POPULATION?

The mobility of older populations should receive much attention from government as there may be a relationship between enhanced mobility and the quality of life for ageing groups. Also, this is especially needed because Australia's population is ageing which leads to an increase in demand for services such as public transport.



2. FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE: TYPES OF TD

ECONOMIC TD

When socio-economic factors such as income and automobile ownership prevents people from accessing opportunities.

PERSONAL TD

Concerns an individual's ability to reach an opportunity. This can occur due to age, single parenthood, ethnicity, immigration status, gender etc.

LOCATION TD

When transport services and opportunities are not reachable from a location. As such, people spend an excessive amount of time traveling to meet their needs.

3. METHODOLOGY

For this research, data was sourced from focus group discussions conducted within the past year in six non-metropolitan locations within Queensland (Ravenshoe, Atherton, Hervey Bay, Greenvale, Richmond and Charters Towers). Data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

4. RESULTS



No/Inadequate Public Transport

'I think our biggest problem really up here is just access to public transport'



Anxiety about driving cessation

'if you can't drive, you can't go anywhere'



Reliance on social networks

'I very rely on people to pick me up and take me'



Poor access to transport information

'I don't know what buses, I don't know when they run'



Figure 1. Word Cloud of the most important mobility needs for participants

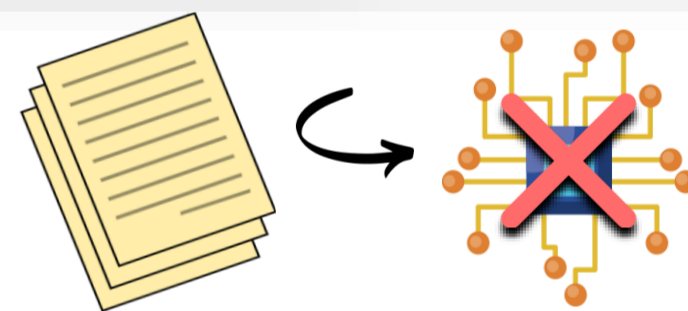
Difficulty in meeting health needs & participating in social activities

'I just find it too stressful now (without a car), so I've stopped going'

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

✓ More appropriate transport information outlets

Information must be clearly documented in printed form.



✓ Better Coordination of Transport Services

Proper scheduling of all available formal and informal transport.



✓ Restrictive Licensing

Seniors in non-urban locations can be restricted in terms of speed, time of travel as well as geographical extent of travel.



✓ Further Research

Research on the successful operation of demand-responsive transport and other flexible pre-booked transport services in non-urban areas is also required.



6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research found seniors living in rural and regional Queensland as transport disadvantaged. Transport disadvantage for seniors requires further research across multiple fronts with the involvement of diverse professionals in order to arrive at sustainable solutions.

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