

President and Chief Executive Officer's Report

Travellers Aid Australia (TAA) continues its focus on providing travel support and a range of related support services to a diverse range of clients



As Melbourne's population increases (and ages), so too does the demand for services at TAA.

2012-2013 has been a busy year for TAA, which continues to provide a vital service for so many travellers whether it be helping elderly people off trains through to assisting young people travel to school.

As in other years, a big focus has been on doing what we do well: supporting people travel from point A to point B independently.

During 2012-2013 we delivered over 212,000 services to travellers in need – this is an 11% increase on the previous year.

We also answered the call to establish a pilot TAA site and we were delighted to work closely with Wodonga Council and open our first regional facility in the North East of the state. The opening at The Cube Wodonga, has enabled us to expand our services and share our expertise and help more people. We are continuing discussions with other councils around the

viability of expanding to other areas. An additional pilot site in Wangaratta will open in September 2013.

The challenge with regional expansions is ensuring the ongoing funding to manage the operations.

On the topic of expansion, our TAA team has also grown and now includes 29 staff and 43 volunteers allowing us to assist approximately 500 people on a daily basis from our sites at Flinders Street and Southern Cross stations, our pilot site at The Cube in Wodonga and in our administration office at City Village in Melbourne's CBD. Maintaining our financial viability continues to be a prime focus for everyone at TAA, particularly given the more challenging climate of funding and fundraising we now operate in.

The TAA board and management team are working together to prioritise opportunities to ensure TAA has the funds required to meet future demands. We are pleased to report that our first year of fundraising has delivered \$211,807. A key focus for us in 2013-2014, will be

on how we can continue to increase our financial reserves and be in a position to serve Victorian, interstate and overseas travellers.

Working with stakeholders will continue to be vital for our future. A key achievement during this year was our contribution to Public Transport Victoria's (PTV) goal to improve customer service experiences for public transport users by working with the Public Transport Ombudsman and transport operators to address systematic issues. Additionally, we worked with Tourism Victoria to create the "Accessible Tourism – It's Your Business" resource kit for businesses in Victoria to improve their accessibility.

We were saddened to farewell three TAA Life Members; Mrs Eveline Lark, the Hon. Geoffrey Connard AM, and Mrs Dorothy Hobson BEM. Their loss is keenly felt within the tight knit TAA community.

Our sincere thanks go to all service users, staff, volunteers, board members, funders and stakeholders. Your support is the lifeblood of Travellers Aid.




Lisa Bowman
President



Jodie Willmer
Chief Executive Officer

Our Performance



Travel Related Emergency Relief

This program assists people with solutions such as subsidised transport fares for travel within metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria, interstate and limited international destinations. We provide information and referrals and a range of practical assistance through our centres.

A decision by Public Transport Victoria' not to continue to fund our Emergency Relief program meant we needed to reduce the operating hours of this program. Despite the reduction in operating hours the number of services delivered remained high, but the number of clients we were able to see and support was reduced. 200 agencies depend on TAA to make travel arrangements for their clients across Australia.

TAA appreciates PTV's continued funding and support for our services for public transport users particularly people with disabilities and the frail aged.

Pathways to Education Program/ NILS® Performance

The Pathways to Education program is part of the Emergency Relief program and has assisted students with tickets to attend school since 2004. While the demand for the program had grown exponentially over the past years, funding has decreased. The main funders are currently FaHCSIA through their Financial Management Program, V/Line through a community partnership and the Invergowrie Foundation.

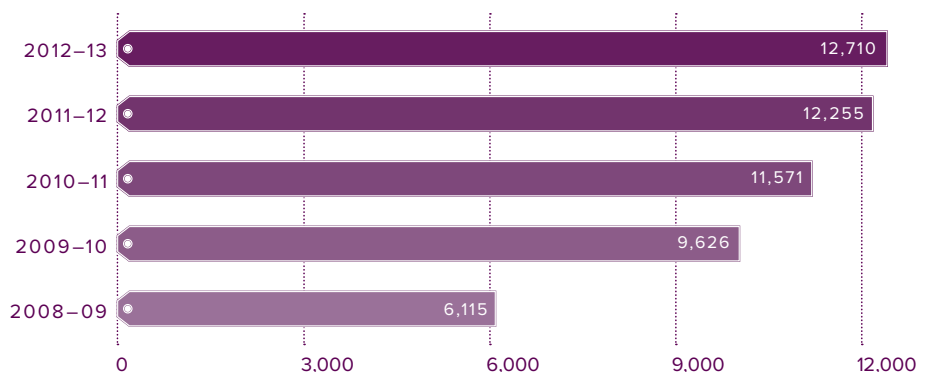
In order to ensure the sustainability into the future of the Pathways to Education program, it has been reviewed in consultation with referring schools and community service organisations, relevant government departments and other key stakeholders. As a result of the review we made significant changes to the eligibility criteria enabling us to focus

on one contained and manageable target group and reduce the pressure on the program. On the other hand the changes mean that many worthy cases miss out, and we can no longer support many of the students who relied on our assistance for years.

The new criteria focuses on students who are disengaged from mainstream schooling and are at a high risk of disengaging from education altogether. The students we currently support attend secondary education in an alternative setting such as at community schools, tertiary institutions or in community organisation settings.

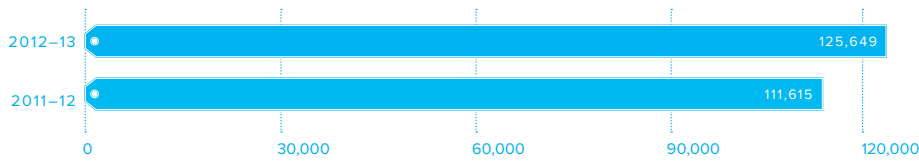
- ▶ In 2012-2013, Travellers Aid assisted 65 students with 71 tickets, 55 of these tickets were yearly tickets. This is a 70% decrease in students assisted compared to the previous financial year.
- ▶ The total cost for the tickets was \$28,074.

Travel Related Emergency Relief: Number of Services



▶ Overall ER services increased by 4% ▶ Hygiene requests increased by 54% ▶ Number of clients decreased by 6%

Southern Cross Station: Number of clients assisted



No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS®)

Our NILS® was implemented in 2011-2012 as an alternative to our Pathways to Education program. Via NILS®, TAA provides loans with no interest to low income families for the purpose of purchasing a half-yearly or yearly student travel pass. Although the uptake for NILS® loans has been low so far, we believe in the potential of the scheme and continue to offer and promote it.

Buggy and Personal Guidance at Southern Cross Station (SCS)

There has been a significant increase in the number of new clients accessing TAA services, in particular the buggy service. This year the buggy service has increased by 12.6% (12,001 trips compared to 10,651 the previous year). Staff initiative and a proactive approach to assist and support travellers in need during quiet periods, has significantly contributed to the increase in buggy



services. This dynamic approach ensures travellers who are visibly distressed, emotionally exhausted or disorientated and unable to manage their luggage or reach their destination will be approached by TAA staff and offered support.

The number of visitors accessing our SCS lounge for information, emergency relief, advice and a place to rest has increased by 12.6% (125,649 clients compared to 111,615 the previous year). There are number of reasons contributing to the increase of visitors including – emergency relief referrals, special events, an increase in national and international visitors and extreme weather conditions.

Travellers Aid Access Service (TAAS)

During 2012-2013 we are pleased to report that we provided over 4,000 hours of personal care.

The implementation of DisabilityCare Australia can potentially provide TAA with an opportunity to look at service delivery in new and innovative ways, for example there is an opportunity to work closer and partner with other disability services providers.

Medical Companion Service (MCS)

Now in its third year of operation, the MCS continues to make a positive impact on the lives of travellers requiring a visit to Melbourne to attend medical appointments:

- ▶ The MCS has assisted over 700 clients with 87% of our clients travelling from regional / rural Victoria. Specifically 22% of our client base came from North West Victoria (Swan Hill, Mildura, Campaspe shire);
- ▶ 24% of our clients have low or no vision;
- ▶ 20 active volunteers contribute nearly 1500 hours to keep the MCS viable;
- ▶ Our referral network has strengthened, we have good relationships with organisations such as Vision Australia, Regional Health Centres, Refugee support organisations and Melbourne based hospitals;
- ▶ A successful fundraising campaign raised \$76,000 to continue the service for the duration of 2012-2013;
- ▶ 32% of total trips are now one-way trips only, this means that our clients were empowered to return independently home; and
- ▶ Our partnership with V/Line has reached new goals demonstrating TAA's ability to successfully work with non-government funders on a long term basis.



Strategic Directions 2012 – 2016

TAA is executing our 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. The Plan was signed off by the Board in June 2012 and we commenced implementation in July 2012.

TAA funding is complex, our stakeholders include all three tiers of government, government authorities, corporations, philanthropic trusts and foundations, private donors, staff, volunteers and of course, our clients. We are committed to good governance to ensure transparency, sustainability and accountability.

Goal 1

Autonomy – Independence – Social Inclusion

We are aiming to achieve this goal via:

- ▶ Establishing partnerships to deliver existing and new services;
- ▶ Embedding the ASM and a strength based approach in every service we deliver; and
- ▶ Communicate this goal to clients, ensuring services are accessible and understood.

Goal 2

Sustainability – Enhancing our legacy

We are aiming to achieve this goal via:

- ▶ Establishing industry and government funding partners;
- ▶ Establishing independent ongoing income streams;
- ▶ Continuing to implement best practice corporate governance; and
- ▶ Continuing to develop our staff via the implementation of our Workforce Development Plan.

Goal 3

Innovation – employing agility to be effective

We are aiming to achieve this goal via:

- ▶ Optimising our internal capacity;
- ▶ Expanding our reach through growth and development;
- ▶ Changing our service mix to reflect the needs of our clients; and
- ▶ Developing solutions to overcome usage barriers and increase autonomy.

Income and expenditure summary for 2012–2013

	2012-2013	2011-2012
Income	\$	\$
Government Grants	1,345,157	1,417,172
Donations (including Philanthropic Trust)	211,807	287,191
Service	187,619	124,752
Other Income	145,217	68,605
Total Income	1,889,800	1,897,720

	2012-2013	2011-2012
Expenses	\$	\$
Employee benefits expense	1,373,252	1,432,296
Depreciation and amortisation expense	86,269	96,200
Emergency relief expense	115,990	176,850
Occupancy expenses	45,695	47,403
Administrative expenses	45,365	32,514
Consulting fees	33,000	28,925
Other expenses from ordinary operation	267,032	172,265
Total Expenses	1,966,603	1,986,453

For a full copy of the 2012–2013 Annual Report and TAA's Audited Financial Statement please visit our website and click on the Publications tab

www.travellersaid.org.au