



Rural Connectivity: The “Community Vehicle Trust” model

Rural based communities rely on car travel to access key services and the wider community. Traditional public transport solutions are difficult to implement in rural areas due to challenges regarding low user numbers, sparse origin & destinations, service frequency and value for money. Active travel modes are not a practical alternative, with rural areas facing challenges such as terrain, distance travelled, lack of infrastructure and physical ability.

How can we service areas with an ageing population and low income to support the **taha hinengaro**, **taha whanau** and **taha tinana** of communities through access to key services and the wider community. Additionally, how can we ensure the Ministry of Environment 2035 rural emission reduction targets are met, and an increasing rural population are able to travel sustainably without reliance on single use car travel.

In rural Canterbury, and elsewhere, the development of the Community Vehicle Trust model is successfully providing transport for aging and disabled members of the community, connecting them from their homes to key services including medical appointments or shopping, via on-demand minibus services. This cooperative, and collaborative, model provides affordable trip costs for passengers and services which are tailored to the needs of the community.

This paper seeks to understand whether the “Community Vehicle Trust” model can be rolled out to other rural areas in New Zealand. The paper identifies indicators such as value for money, community expectations and accessibility to services, to assess the benefits of the “Community Vehicle Trust” model as a mobility solution in rural communities.