

## Blue Mountains Youth Bus Pilot

BLUE MOUNTAINS, NSW

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The Blue Mountains Youth Bus was a nine-month trial conducted in 2002. It offered a transport service connecting villages and townships in the lower mountains to railway stations, and youth-friendly destinations e.g. ice rink, ten-pin bowling, cinema, Penrith Plaza and other requested locations. Transport was provided by a local bus operator, with costs being split 50:50 between the scheme and the service provider.

- The Blue Mountains has 26 towns running along a ridge line, and the transport scheme developed needed to be responsive to this geographic situation. There is a major rail link, but many young people can't get to it.
- The implementation of the programme relied on funding. To achieve this, the Blue Mountains Youth Bus pilot was put into council business plans and road safety strategic plans.
- Prior to initiating the pilot, young people were asked what they wanted; which days, times & where they wanted to travel to.
- A strong project team was formed including members of the student representative councils. The Youth Suicide Prevention network auspiced the project
- Useful practice developed through the pilot programme:
  - A Code of Conduct on the bus
  - A ticket and voucher system
  - Young people identified the route the bus would take
- The issue of cost was debated and it was decided that there would be a \$1 fee per trip (up to 30 kms). This gave the service some worth and the young people some ownership of it.
- An assessment of the pass holders was conducted resulting in a change to the routes and bus timetable in response to the survey results.
- Although the service does not operate anymore due to lack of funding, the best things coming out of it were the partnerships and support for young people and the relationships formed with the commercial transport provider.