



## MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 29 May 2018

### MAKING ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT A REALITY

Getting out of the house and socialising isn't easy for people with severe injuries and disabilities living in and around many regional towns, including Dubbo and Tamworth. icare, NSW's social insurer, will be in Dubbo on 1 June and Tamworth on 6 June to run community workshops to explore accessible transport solutions to meet the needs of people severely injured on our roads or in the workplace.

Eugene McGarrell, icare's General Manager, Health and Community Engagement, said they were hearing from many Lifetime Care participants who felt isolated and excluded because it was so hard to get out.

"Our care coordinators talk with participants all the time and believe there has to be a better way to help the people we support. For instance, a young woman who acquired a spinal injury following a car accident was upset because she couldn't go out and meet her friends at this really difficult time in her life because she lived too far out of town," Mr McGarrell said. "A man who had been seriously injured wanted to join his mates for a yarn. But with a taxi costing \$60 to his home outside town, rebuilding his social network was just too expensive.

"Transport needs to be available, affordable and accessible, and we want our participants to be autonomous in how they get it. We know that the longer people are away from work or their community, the greater their risk of social isolation and the likelihood of the onset of mental health issues, which can delay recovery.

"That is why we decided to look at what's possible. We chose Dubbo and Tamworth because we know they have strong communities and there is a significant number of people living with spinal and brain injuries in both regions," he said.

icare approached local organisations and people with lived experience to set up solutions workshops in Dubbo and Tamworth to take a deep dive and look at what options could be available locally.

"We've had an excellent response, with representatives from councils, the community sector and transport operators all interested in working together," Mr McGarrell said.

Mr McGarrell explained that the best ideas formulated at the workshop would be developed further with free business planning and support.

"And then, if these concepts are shown to be feasible, they will be pitched to the icare foundation for seed funding to further develop them," he said.

This type of social innovation has never been done before, where a social insurer co-designs a solution with the community for them to run. icare's philosophy is that we want to be part of the local conversation and invest in country initiatives."

#### DUBBO

**Where: Dubbo RSL, 178 Brisbane St**

**When: 10am-3pm, Friday 1 June 2018**

**Register: [solutionsworkshopdubbo.eventbrite.com.au](https://www.eventbrite.com.au/solutionsworkshopdubbo)**

**About icare:** icare (Insurance & Care NSW) is the insurance and care provider for NSW.

We insure 3.7 million workers, motorists and builders and 296,000 employers. For more information, visit: [www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au)





**TAMWORTH**

**Where: Tamworth Community Centre (Cnr Peel and Darling St, Tamworth)**

**When: 10am-3pm, Friday 1 June 2018**

**Register: [solutionsworkshoptamworth.eventbrite.com.au](https://solutionsworkshoptamworth.eventbrite.com.au)**

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