



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **BUDGET 2017: A WIN FOR AGED AND DISABILITY TRANSPORT**

The Australian Community Transport Association (ACTA) has welcomed the 2017 Budget announcement of a two-year extension of the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, which is the prime funding source for aged transport services in Australia.

Chair of the ACTA Bethany Simmonds said before the hand down of last night's budget community transport providers had an uncertain future, with funding due to dry up next year, and no guarantee of further government backing.

With finances in the bag, ACTA is urging Federal and State Governments to extend contracts until at least 2020.

"It is very difficult to plan for future service delivery without funding guarantees, so we welcome another two years of confirmed support. This will give us the opportunity to prepare for a more commercialised marketplace and to push for the introduction of a Social Values Act," Ms Simmonds said.

A Social Values Act, like that implemented in 2012 in the UK, would mean that any Government procurement would require a certain amount of social value outcomes from government spending.

"This would benefit Australian society in a myriad of ways without increasing spending," she said.

The budget also held good news for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) recipients, with the increase of a levy on Medicare to fund the NDIS.

"As the NDIS is being rolled out across Australia, we are already seeing a chronic underfunding of transport in individuals' packages," she said.

"ACTA is calling for the Government to ensure that the increase in NDIS funding is directed to the proper planning and delivery of transport services for people with disabilities," she said.

"Transport is a basic enabling service that allows individuals to maintain connection to their communities – and with that, a quality of life."

ACTA urge the Government and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), and planners to ensure that transport is placed at a high priority within the NDIS."

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