MEDIA RELEASE

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Community collaboration improves Marlborough Nelson transport options

A community vehicle service set up to assist residents from Picton and the Marlborough Sounds with medical appointments in Nelson, has been extended to include passengers from Blenheim and Renwick.

The Marlborough Sounds Community Vehicle Trust began operating an 'on demand' service for passengers from Picton and anywhere along Queen Charlotte Drive and State Highway 6, in August last year.

Requests from Blenheim residents for transport resulted in the charitable trust extending the area it services to include residents travelling to Nelson medical appointments and returning to Marlborough following a hospital stay.

Trust spokesperson, Bryan Strong says there's been a lot of discussion around getting a viable service running across the region and following a trail period he is optimistic they have a good model in place.

"The service particularly helps older people, anyone living in remote areas and people who cannot easily access transport," he says. "Since it started we have established pick up points for those living off the beaten track and gradually increased the number of customers using the community vehicle."

Pat Davidsen, Service Manager Clinical Support at Nelson Marlborough Health says the provision of this service is a result of consultation with a number of agencies and the support and input from key people in the Marlborough community.

"This really is a great outcome," he says, "Bryan Strong has been tireless in his efforts to get this underway and chairman of the Hospital Services Support Group, Walter Scott has also made a valuable contribution to the establishment of this service."

The Marlborough Sounds Community Vehicle Trust has the backing of Nelson Marlborough Health, Blenheim Primary Health Organisation, Marlborough District Council and support from many local businesses.

Passengers wishing to use the community vehicle will need to pay $15 per year to become a member of the Trust, and the cost of a return trip is $40.
The Marlborough Sounds Community Vehicle Trust can be contacted on (03) 574 1311 or by emailing soundsvehicle@gmail.com.

Patients are reimbursed for their travel costs if they have a community services card, the distance travelled is more than 80 kilometres and they are registered for national travel assistance.

For more information on patient transport options go to www.nmdhb.govt.nz/patients-and-visitors/patient-travel/health-shuttles/

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