



Newtown Neighbourhood Centre Incorporated

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Amanda Touma
Marketing Manager
Marrickville Metro

Dear Amanda

Firstly let me introduce myself and my organisation to you. My name is Lisa Burns and I am the Centre Coordinator of the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC). NNC provides community services in the inner west of Sydney. We provide services to the aged, people with disabilities, and people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people on low incomes and the general community.

I am writing to you today to highlight the issue of how some local residents find it extremely difficult to organise their shopping. Our local government area encompasses 15 suburbs and has a population of approximately 76,000 residents. Of these 76,000 people the 1998 survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers highlighted a total of 16.9% of this group identified as having some level of disability. Almost two thirds of local people with a disability have a disability that affects mobility. In addition, around 10 % of the population is aged over 65 and limited mobility is often a factor with increasing age.

In the Marrickville local area there are eight railway stations and only Newtown has been earmarked for easy access. Though no date has been given when Newtown Station will be made into an easy access station.

The nearest stations with easy access are Summer Hill and Wolli Creek, but neither is staffed for all services which limits accessibility. We are aware that there are only 4 local bus routes available with a limited and infrequent service for wheelchair users. Users report to us that low-floor buses often do not arrive at all and when questioned the local depots are not able to confirm if or when an accessible bus will appear as promoted in the timetable.

It seems that the only recourse for some members of the community is to travel by taxi. I don't know if you are aware of the longstanding difficulties people experience in attempting to use the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) system. The lack of WAT's to meet demand, booking delays, difficulty in hailing and prohibitive cost despite the Taxi Subsidy Scheme renders taxis to be impractical as an alternative to the lack of rail or bus access.

Also it is important to note that accessibility does not just affect people with a disability and older people, it also affects parents and carers negotiating travel with young children.

I can easily observe Marrickville Metro's commitment to social responsibility and I would like to applaud you on your recent initiative on the BYO plastic bag promotion. I know you already do have a strong commitment to people with a mobility issue by providing free motorised scooters and manual wheel chairs to your customers. Your car park has a record car space of fourteen designated disabled parking spaces. I also know that Marrickville Metro is a great place for people with slight mobility problems because of your one level shopping centre.

At the NNC three times a week we provide a bus shopping service to Marrickville Metro for 100 clients. When people become too frail for the bus service we provide one-on-one assisted shopping service and then a list service for people who are unable to leave their homes.

Whilst I do believe this is a valuable service we offer we know that there are still many people in our community who find getting their shopping to their homes very difficult. The issue that does concern me is that I believe none of the food shops offer home delivery.

So my letter to you today is to see if there is any way we could change this fact. I also believe that as a consumer that does not drive I would love to be able to go to a shopping centre and be able to get all my shopping

delivered. Could you imagine what a great service it would be to go shopping and get not just your groceries, but your meat and your fruit and vegetables? In fact I think this kind of one stop shopping would be the first of its kind and would assist not just the aged or people with mobility issues but also carers and parents with children and also promote Marrickville Metro as a leader in shopping centres. Of course it would also assist people who do not own private transport of which there is a high percentage in the inner west.

Also I believe the better quality shopping services offered can only assist in increasing the numbers of shoppers that would come to Marrickville Metro. I look forward to your response to the issues I have raised and please do not hesitate to contact me regarding this matter.

Your Sincerely

Lisa Burns
Centre Coordinator