

Jenny Aitchison

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads



Media Release

New transport services launched in isolated communities

Monday, 15 July 2024

Isolated Outback communities previously starved of transport options will soon have access to new bus services funded by the NSW Labor Government.

The Brewarrina Outback Express and the Barraay Waraba, meaning 'Fast Turtle' in Gamilaraay language, will each offer flexible pre-booked transport services for the Brewarrina and Collarenebri communities on a trial basis for 24 months.

The two services will give communities greater access to vital health care, employment, social and recreation opportunities which are often for taken for granted in larger towns and cities.

Each service is expected to prove popular as in Brewarrina and Collarenebri, the proportion of households without a registered motor vehicle is well above the state average. In Collarenebri it's actually twice the state average.

Both services have been able to get up and running thanks to funding from the government's Transport Access Regional Partnerships (TARP) grants program.

The Brewarrina Local Aboriginal Lands Council received a grant to operate the Outback Express which will run three days a week from 31 July, servicing the Brewarrina community as well as four neighbouring Aboriginal villages — Bush Queen, Barwon 4, Newtown and Billabong.

In late August the Express will also extend to offer a return service from Brewarrina to Bourke once a week on Thursday, and once a fortnight on a Friday from Weilmoringle to Brewarrina. This will allow residents from Brewarrina and Weilmoringle reliable access to essential services such as medical care.

The Barraay Waraba (Fast Turtle) project was proposed by the Healthy Communities Foundation and will establish a regular and reliable transport service between Collarenebri and Moree every Thursday, as well as between Collarenebri and Walgett on Monday and Friday.

The Point to Point Transport Commissioner has been working side by side with Transport for NSW to help these two providers become accredited to operate the services.

The Brewarrina Outback Express starts operating on 31 July and bookings can be made in person from 30 July at 105 Bathurst Street in Brewarrina or by calling 6839 2273.

The Collarenebri Barraay Waraba (Fast Turtle) service is planned to start on 18 July and bookings can be made from Wednesday 17 July by calling 02 5809 9505 or by dropping into the Healthy Communities office at 11 Wilson Street in Collarenebri.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison said:

"Outside of school student travel there was previously no transport options for residents of Weilmoringle, 100 kilometres north of Brewarrina.

“Now thanks to investments the NSW Labor Government is making to reduce isolation and improve access to transport where it’s needed most, residents in places like Weilmoringle have a regular service they can rely on to get them to the doctor, grocery store or other transport services.

“These might sound like small things to people in the city but our government understands that investing in services like the Outback Express and Barraay Waraba Fast Turtle can actually make a huge difference to people’s lives by helping to close gaps in life expectancy, educational, employment and other outcomes we often see in remote parts of our state.”

Independent Member for Barwon Roy Butler said:

“The Brewarrina Outback Express and the Barraay Waraba (Fast Turtle) will vastly improve travel opportunities and help reduce isolation.

“People living in remote communities shouldn’t miss out on travel opportunities, family visits and important appointments because of a lack of transport options. Improving public transport to remote communities will help have an impact on everything from cost-of-living pressures to medical outcomes for people in the bush.

“I hope the local communities will take advantage of these new services and that we make sure they’re around for a long time to come.”

Labor’s spokesperson for Barwon Stephen Lawrence said:

“In Collarenebri, there is no current transport option other than limited transport for those with medical needs, no transport available at all to get to Walgett and, limited availability of private vehicles.

“This is just one community I’m delighted to see will benefit from the NSW Labor Government’s investments in improved access to transport.

“For too long these communities were overlooked by the city-centric former Liberal National Government and I’m proud Labor is directing investments responsibly where they’re needed most.”

Brewarrina Shire Council Mayor Vivian Slack-Smith said:

“This is a service the Brewarrina and Weilmoringle communities have long been calling for.

“Thank you to the Brewarrina Local Aboriginal Lands Council, who will operate the service, and to Minister Aitchison and the Transport Access Regional Partnerships (TARP) grants program for funding this vital service.

“It will make a real difference in the lives of many in our community, helping them to have easier access to services and opportunities in town, and the wider region.”

MEDIA: Ryan Young | Minister Aitchison | 0477 608 886