

CONNECT:
INNER WEST
Community
Transport
Group Inc.

Client Handbook

Registered NDIS Provider



02 9558 6800
www.connectinnerwest.org.au

Unit C, 6 Carrington Road, Marrickville NSW 2204



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CONNECT: INNER WEST Community Transport Group Inc.

Connect: Inner West Community Transport Group acknowledges the Gadigal and Wangal peoples of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of this land and pays its respects to its Elders, past, present and emerging.

All information provided within this publication is correct at time of printing, though may be subject to change periodically.

What is Community Transport?

Community Transport is a door to door transportation service. It helps people who can't afford or have difficulty using private or public transport.

NSW Community Transport services in NSW are determined by where you live or as allocated by My Aged Care assessors.

Who are Connect: Inner West?

We are a not-for-profit service that has been providing transport services since 1983. We believe in equal access so everyone can access the facilities and services they need.

We provide a door to door transportation service for seniors, people who need help getting out and about, people with a disability and other eligible people who can't afford or have difficulty accessing private or public transport.

Membership

Connect: Inner West is a member based community organisation. Both clients, and members of the community are welcome to join and become a member for a small annual fee.

You do not have to be a member of Connect: Inner West in order to access our services in any way.

Where do we operate?

Our services are generally for those people living in the former Leichhardt and Marrickville Local Government Areas (now part of the Inner West Council). These include the suburbs of Annandale, Balmain, Birchgrove, Leichhardt, Lilyfield, Rozelle, Dulwich Hill, Enmore, Lewisham, Marrickville, Petersham, Stanmore, Sydenham, Tempe and some parts of Newtown and Camperdown.

Getting started

Am I eligible for community transport services?

Connect: Inner West services are primarily funded under two different programs:

- The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), and
- The Community Transport Program (CTP)

Connect: Inner West applies for funding under these (and other) programs. The funding bodies define the eligibility requirements – they are not decided by Connect: Inner West. Both these funding sources have different eligibility requirements.

CHSP funded services

CHSP funding is focused on older people who need help getting out and about. CHSP is about helping people stay in their homes and providing basic services that facilitate this.

If you already receive other CHSP services such as Meals on Wheels or Neighbour Aid, then you're likely to be already eligible.

Generally, if you're in an aged care facility, there is usually assisted care included as part of the service and we are unable to provide community transport services.

Clients must apply to use our services through the My Aged Care portal. Visit their website at www.myagedcare.gov.au or call **1800 200 422** to find out more.

CTP funded Services

CTP services are for people who are "Transport Disadvantaged". This is when you have limited or no access to private transport and can't make use of 'conventional' transport, like buses or trains. It's not just whether conventional transport services operate near you, it's also whether you are able to use them.

Unlike CHSP, CTP services are available to a person of any age, with or without a disability – they're for anybody who is **transport disadvantaged**. You may be suffering from an injury or illness, or recovering from surgery, rendering you unable to drive or catch transport temporarily. We can help you during this time.

If you're unsure as to whether you are eligible for our services under either of these programs, or, if you are an NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) client or currently on a Home Care Package (HCP), please call us for assistance.

Other funded services; NDIS and Home Care Packages

Connect: Inner west is a registered (NDIS) provider and is able to provide services for people with a disability under the age of 65. Connect can also provide transport to Home Care Package (HCP) recipients.

Which community transport service program is best for me?

Our office staff are happy to discuss your circumstances with you and advise you about our available services, your eligibility, and which program is best for you.

If you're not eligible, our staff will do their best to advise you of any transport alternatives.

What happens after I'm registered with My Aged Care?

Once you have registered with My Aged Care, you can book any of our available services immediately by calling our office.

There are a variety of services available to you which are detailed within the handbook and on our website.

We will send you a welcome pack in the mail. This pack will include our handbook and service brochure, the fee schedule and a number of other helpful resources.






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Bookings and Services

What services are available?

- **Medical Transport:** If you need to see your GP or a specialist, we can help. We provide non-emergency medical transport around the Inner West, including Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH). We provide transport to St Vincent's Hospital, the Sydney Eye Hospital and the Sydney Dental Hospital. We also drive to the Strong Clinic at Balmain hospital, St George Hospital and Canterbury Hospital. We may also be able to assist with transport to the Prince of Wales, Royal North Shore and Mater Hospital campuses depending on availability.
- **Individual Transport:** We help you get to a wide variety of destinations throughout the Inner West. Whether it's visiting the bank, catch ups with friends and family or visiting the hairdresser.
- **Social Outings:** We have an exciting social community transport calendar that helps you connect with your friends whilst exploring Sydney and surrounds. Our regular outings include visits to gardens and nurseries, scenic drives to the Illawarra, Central Coast, Northern Beaches, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands and more. We take in shows and plays, visit historical sites, working farms, zoos, parks and often take a cruise along one of Sydney's many beautiful waterways. Exciting weekends away and overnight stays are also on offer regularly.
- **Shopping transport:** We provide many shopping services in Sydney's Inner West to help you buy groceries, clothes and household items.
- **Jetstream Shuttle:** The Jetstream is a door-to-door transport service for clients living south of Parramatta Road (the former Marrickville LGA). It combines features of both a door-to-door service with a route service. It's like a cross between a taxi and a bus service.
- **TigeRider Shuttle:** The TigeRider is a door to door transport service for Clients living north of Parramatta Road (the former Leichhardt LGA). It combines features of both a door-to-door service with a route service. It's like a cross between a taxi and a bus service.
- **Community CabCharge:** This is a service clients can use outside of Connect: Inner West's normal operating hours. It allows you to travel via taxi at a subsidised rate. Please call to find out if you're eligible.
- **Vehicle & Driver Hire:** We can hire vehicles and/or drivers to qualifying organisations. Our qualified drivers can be hired to drive your vehicles too!

How do I book a service?

Bookings **must** be made through the office. Regular shopping services can be booked on a routine basis, such as a permanent fortnightly booking. Or you may call in advance when you want to use each service.

Bookings should be made at least 3 business days in advance to allow our scheduling team to efficiently allocate time and get everyone to their destinations. Where possible, transport to appointments should be booked as soon as you know your appointment time to ensure you secure your place.

When booking one of our social outings, refer to the calendar for the allocated booking window for each outing. Places on each outing are limited.

Confirmation of your booking

The business day before your scheduled medical or individual transport booking you will receive an automated message advising of your pick up time. Please have an answering service activated to ensure you receive this notification if you are out or unable to answer the call.

If you have a mobile phone, please let the office know. This is particularly helpful in the case of Medical and Individual Transport so we can advise you directly when a return trip is available to take you home. Please ensure your mobile phone is switched on, and your message service activated.

Outings are slightly different in that we will call you personally to confirm your place and pick up time. Your place will be confirmed 5 working days before the outing is scheduled, while your pick up time will be confirmed one working day prior.

How do I cancel a service?

If you are unable to attend your booking, please contact us as soon as possible so we can allocate your seat to someone else who may otherwise miss out. Cancellation Fees may apply.

What if Connect: Inner West cancels a service?

Unexpected mechanical problems or driver illness can occasionally occur. We have contingency plans in place, but despite best efforts a service may need to be cancelled. On the rare occasion this happens, we will always attempt to contact you and arrange an alternative.

What if a service has reached capacity?

In periods of peak demand, clients, where appropriate, may be required to share a car with other clients. If a service is at its absolute capacity you will be put on a wait-list.

What if I can't book transport in time for my appointment?

Doctors and hospitals will try to be flexible with appointment times when they know you use community transport. If Connect: Inner West services are booked out for your appointment time, please tell the doctors/hospital receptionist, and ask if the date or time can be changed.

If for any reason we are still unable to arrange transportation at a suitable time, you may be eligible to use our Community Cabcharge card facility.

What help is provided on services?

All services provide a level of assistance and drivers will always help you with things like getting in or out of the vehicle, should you need it.

Not all clients are the same – some may require more help than others. What one client may consider appropriate assistance may be considered by another passenger as fussing or demeaning of their ability.

Our staff need clarity in this regard. Assistance is part of the service, so please let us know if you need help.

The level of assistance provided may vary depending on the type of service. Many of our shopping services have an assistant on board to assist you with your items, while only select social outings will have an assistant. If you require assistance please be sure to check that it is available on a particular service at the time of booking.

For safety reasons, the drivers on some services may not be able to leave the vehicle.

Can we make a stop on the way home?

Clients occasionally ask drivers to stop or make a quick detour. A typical scenario is to stop at a chemist or a shop for milk. A decision to stop or detour is at the driver's discretion and is contingent on client and driver safety, other passengers and the vehicle's forward commitments.

How much do services cost?

Please refer to our current fee table on our website: www.connectinnerwest.org.au

How do I pay?

From the 1st of July 2021 Connect: Inner West will operate as cashless. Clients will be given the options of payment by debit card, credit card or direct debit. Transactions can be made in person, electronically or by phone.

Why do we charge service fees?

Our fees help recover some of the costs of running the service. Community Transport providers are required under their operating contracts with TfNSW and as part of the NDIS to charge fees to clients.

Drivers and Bus Assistants are not permitted to negotiate fees, so please discuss the matter with the office well before your trip.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, feel free to call us for a confidential chat. You will not be denied care and services because of your inability to pay a fee for reasons beyond your control.

I have a carer. Do you need to know their details?

Yes, whether your carer is a relative, a neighbour or a friend, we need to register their details so we may contact them if necessary. We like to ensure our services meet your expectations, as well as theirs.

It is imperative that you advise at the time of booking if you will have a carer accompanying you so that our scheduling team can ensure space is allocated in the vehicle.

In addition:

- Carers may travel with you provided they can be picked at the same location.
- When travelling with you, Carers travel free.
- Carers may be eligible for our services in their own right.

What is a reassessment?

A reassessment is to check that we have up-to-date information about you.

From time to time a representative of Connect: Inner West, may contact you and conduct a reassessment. This will be conducted at a time suitable to you.

Like your original assessment, it's to ensure we have the right information to serve you best. The staff member will also check that services are still meeting your needs and advise you of any other services that may be useful.

Can I refer someone else for services?

Yes, you certainly can – contact My Aged Care – **1800 200 422** to refer a friend, family member or carer.

Confidentiality

Connect: Inner West is bound to privacy legislation, and we conform to those requirements. All information regarding passengers is kept secure in our office. Paper-based information and records are regularly disposed of securely, and computer-based information is password protected.

Your private information will never be disclosed to anyone without your permission. You have a right to be informed of, or access any of your personal information.

How do we use your information?

After completing the questions, you'll be asked if you agree to some of your information being made available to other parties.

If you agree, statistical information concerning your use of services will be provided to government agencies. The data is encrypted into a code before being sent to them. It is used for planning purposes and is useful to both Connect: Inner West and the funding bodies.

The data is also used as proof that Connect: Inner West has provided services to you and is used in funding decisions.

Your decision to withhold information for privacy reasons does not affect your right to services.



Rights, responsibilities and risks

What are my rights and responsibilities?

Naturally, when you use Connect: Inner West services, you have an expectation of how you'll be treated. Likewise, in providing services to you, a level of cooperation is important to Connect: Inner West, so the services run smoothly, and everyone gets treated fairly and equally. Connect: Inner West does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preference, age or political views.

Connect: Inner West is committed to ensuring that all its staff, volunteers and governing body members act ethically, responsibly and in the best interests of the organisation and its clients at all times. All staff, volunteers and governing body members are bound by the Connect Inner West Code of Ethics which can be found on our website.

Passenger rights

What you can expect from Connect: Inner West:

1. GENERAL

- To be treated and accepted as an individual, and to have your individual preferences respected.
- To be treated with dignity, with your privacy respected.
- To have your culture, values and beliefs treated with sensitivity.
- To receive care that is respectful of you, your family and home.
- To receive care without being obliged to feel grateful to those providing your care.
- To have full and effective use of all your human, legal and consumer rights, including the right to freedom of speech regarding your care.
- To be treated without exploitation, abuse, discrimination, harassment or neglect.

2. PARTICIPATION

- To be involved in identifying the assistance most appropriate for your needs.
- To choose the care and services that best meet your assessed needs within the limits of the resources available.
- To participate in making decisions that affect you.
- To have your representative participate in decisions relating to your care if you do not have capacity.

3. CARE AND SERVICES

- To receive reliable, coordinated, safe, quality care and services which are appropriate to your assessed needs.
- To be sent within 14 days after registering with My Aged Care, a Welcome Pack detailing the care and services available to you.
- To receive care and services as described in the Welcome Pack that take account, where possible, of your lifestyle, other care arrangements and cultural, linguistic and religious preferences.
- To ongoing review of the care and services you receive (both periodic and in response to changes in your personal circumstances), and modification of the care and services as required.

4. PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Privacy and confidentiality of your personal information.
- Access to your personal information including any incident reports lodged.

5. COMMUNICATION

- To be helped to understand any information you are given.
- To be given a copy of the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Community Care.
- To be offered a written agreement that includes all agreed matters. (NDIS)
- To choose a person to speak on your behalf for any purpose.

6. COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS

- To be provided with information on how to make comments, feedback and complaints about the care and services you receive.
- To provide feedback about the care and services you receive, without fear of losing the care or being disadvantaged in any other way.
- To have complaints investigated fairly and confidentially, and to have appropriate steps taken to resolve issues of concern.

7. FEES

- To have your fees determined in a way that is transparent, accessible and fair.
- To receive invoices that are clear and in a format that is understandable.
- To have your fees reviewed periodically and on request when there are changes to your financial circumstances.
- Not to be denied care and services because of your inability to pay a fee for reasons beyond your control.



Passenger responsibilities

You are expected:

1. GENERAL

- To respect the rights of Connect: Inner West staff, volunteers, and other passengers to their human, legal and industrial rights, including the right to work in a safe environment.
- To adhere to safety requirements, including utilising safety equipment as nominated by staff, including seat belts and asking staff to carry shopping only within reason and specified limits.
- To treat Connect: Inner West staff, volunteers, and other passengers without exploitation, abuse, discrimination or harassment.

2. CARE AND SERVICES

- To abide by the terms of any agreement in place. This includes accepting the conditions and limitations of any service you have chosen.
- To acknowledge that your needs may change and to negotiate modifications of care and service when your care needs do change.
- To accept responsibility for your own actions and choices even though some actions and choices may involve an element of risk.

3. COMMUNICATION

- To give enough information to help Connect: Inner West to deliver and review your services. This includes cooperating with staff, communicating with staff about your needs, and advising Connect of any change in your circumstances or health that may affect your transport services
- To clearly communicate to staff the level of physical help you need.
- To communicate to Connect: Inner West and their staff any perceived problems with the care and services you are receiving.

4. ACCESS

- To allow safe and reasonable access for Connect: Inner West staff and volunteers at the times specified, or otherwise by agreement.
- To provide reasonable notice if you do not need a service. This means providing the earliest possible notice of a cancellation so that we may allocate your transportation to other passengers.

5. FEES

- To pay any fee as specified in the agreement or negotiate an alternative arrangement with Connect: Inner West if any changes occur in your financial circumstances.
- To provide enough information for Connect: Inner West to determine an appropriate level of fee.

What are the risks?

Punctuality

- We do our best to ensure that clients are picked up within 15 minutes of the stated pick up time, however, occasionally there are unforeseen circumstances such as traffic delays or incidents with other clients that may cause unexpected delays.

Safety & Compliance

- We use vehicles that are modern and maintained according to legislative and our contractual requirements.
- All the drivers at Connect: Inner West have the correct licence and are appropriately trained and supported by the organisation. However, on occasion, in a busy and congested operating area, incidents with other vehicles may occur.
- All staff undergo regular Police and Working with Children and Vulnerable people checks. They are also certified in CPR, general first aid, infection control, manual handling and undertake ongoing relevant training in other areas.

Property

- Any items found aboard our vehicles will be returned to their owner as soon as possible if they can be identified. Alternatively property will be retained for a period before disposal or donation to charity as appropriate.

Continuity of Services

- We will do our best to maintain current services. However, if we consider a particular service to be economically nonviable, we lose safe access to a location, or any other reason, we reserve the right to discontinue services.



Specific information for our NDIS Clients

Personal Information

In order to carry out our work efficiently and effectively, and to provide our clients with a safe and high quality service, Connect needs to collect personal information from clients to help Connect: Inner West to develop, deliver and review a service plan and offer a written agreement.

Clients are expected to abide by the terms of the written agreement. This includes accepting the conditions and limitations of any service you have chosen. You have the option to opt out of NDIS quality audits if you wish to do so.

The information we need to collect and record includes but is not limited to: services provided; NDIS plan; personal details; language/s spoken; ethnicity; funding type/s; eligibility for funding – category of funding; emergency contacts; personal risk assessment – clients' needs/assistance; information updates; service updates. You have the right to access or update the personal information held by us at any time.

We will ask for your consent to provide this information before we ask you for personal information. We will always seek your consent and provide details on the nature of disclosure before disclosing any information to other parties.

The information we collect is generally recorded in written form. On occasion, we may take photographs and/or record our clients for marketing or other purposes. We will always seek permission before photographing or recording you.

Information collected is used, inter alia, as an aid to support provision; to make sure we are transporting the right person; in the event of an emergency; for Government reporting purposes; for insurance reasons and more generally to provide safe and high quality services to our clients.

We will not give your information to any other party unless required by law, there is a need to prevent a serious threat to the health or safety of you or another person, or if there is a need to report a serious crime.

Your information is stored on our RouteMatch dispatch system. This database is password protected and a perpetual record of staff access to the system is maintained.

You have the right to withhold some, or all personal information without prejudice. Keep in mind we may not be able to provide services to you in full or part if we lack the information to do so efficiently, effectively, or safely.

If for any reason a suspected or actual breach of privacy occurs, you will be informed immediately and about what has or may have happened, and what Connect is doing or will do to address the situation.

Client choice in worker

NDIS clients may express their preference for specific staff to provide them with service/s. Connect will endeavour to meet NDIS client requests for a particular driver, or a driver with specific skills (or of a particular gender) where possible.

Transition to and from providers

If you are transitioning to Connect as a new client or moving on from Connect to another provider, we will identify the risks associated with the transition, and assess the risks (if any) for their likelihood and severity. Where appropriate, risk management strategies will be developed, implemented and evaluated. If you are transitioning from another provider, Connect may seek advice on risk management from the other provider. If transitioning from Connect, we may provide risk management guidance to the other provider.

We will ask for your consent to provide personal information before we ask you for personal information. We will always seek your consent and provide details on the nature of disclosure before disclosing any information to other parties.

Participant Money and Property

Connect does not undertake any cash transactions with our NDIS client group, nor do we handle or manage participants' money, belongings or property.

Connect will not give participants financial advice under any circumstances.



Complaints & Feedback

Any complaint made by an NDIS client will be treated in accordance with the requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018.

For further policy information visit <https://connectinnerwest.org.au/ndis-clients/>

Feedback

Connect: Inner West actively encourages clients to provide feedback as a source of information for improving services and activities.

The organisation fosters a service culture that encourages open and honest communication and will protect the right of clients to provide feedback and to make complaints about service delivery, providing anonymity during the process.

Connect encourages and makes it easy for people to provide feedback. We record and analyse all information arising from feedback and use it to continually improve our services.

Any complaints made will not effect your ongoing service provision.

Policy and Procedure

You will find more information pertaining to our Feedback policy, and other relevant policies and procedures, on our website.

<https://connectinnerwest.org.au/policy-and-procedures/>

Making a complaint

If you are unhappy about any part of the service provided to you and would like to provide feedback or make a complaint, we suggest you follow these steps:

1. If you feel comfortable about it, raise your complaint with the staff member or passenger concerned in the first place.
2. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of step one, or not comfortable discussing the issue with the person concerned, you should contact the Operations Manager.
3. If the issue is still not satisfactorily resolved, you should raise the issue with the General Manager. Our office can put you in touch.
4. If after approaching the above people, the issue is still not resolved, you may want to refer the complaint to the body that funds Community Transport in NSW. Write to:

**Service Contract Teams
Community Transport
Transport for NSW
Locked Bag 5085
Parramatta NSW 2124**

5. You will be informed of the outcome of your complaint and asked for your feedback on the complaints procedure.

What is an advocate?

An advocate is a person who, with your authority, represents your interests. You can use an independent advocate of your choice to negotiate on your behalf. This may be a family member, friend or an advocacy service.



If you don't know anyone appropriate, we can help find an advocacy service for you. A Community Transport staff member can also act on your behalf if you wish. It's important for us to know that someone has the right to speak on your behalf.

If you wish to use a person or a member of staff as an advocate or would like to change your nominated advocate, then you need to inform us. That's best done in writing, but if you prefer another method please call the office and we'll work out a way.

Escalation of a Complaint

If you feel your complaint has not been correctly or appropriately addressed internally through the channels outlined, you can choose to escalate your complaint to the Ombudsman, or for our NDIS clients, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

NDIS Safeguarding Commission.

- Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.
- National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a complaint form online at <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/contact>

Using the Ombudsman

The NSW Ombudsman's Office has an excellent online guide about making a complaint, and also an online complaint form - **www.ombo.nsw.gov.au**
You can also phone them on weekdays, 9am to 5pm, on **(02) 9286 1000**

Discontinuing a service

Connect: Inner West strives to provide quality services that meet your needs. It's important to know, however, what should happen if you decide to discontinue using our services or the circumstances in which we may discontinue providing service/s to you.

In accordance with Connect: Inner West policy, the decision to discontinue a service may be taken by either you or Connect: Inner West. You may decide to discontinue a service due to a change in circumstances after which the service may no longer be appropriate, or you may have become dissatisfied with the service to the extent that you decide not to use the service further.

If you leave a service due to dissatisfaction or because of a dispute, Connect: Inner West will ensure that:

- you are aware of your rights and responsibilities;
- you are reminded of the feedback process;
- you are reminded of your right to an advocate and that you are provided with information on agencies that provide advocacy services;
- staff deal with the situation in a sensitive manner;
- future access to services is not jeopardised as a result of a dispute.

Connect: Inner West may withdraw a service for one of the following reasons:

- the service ceases to operate;
- you are no longer eligible for the service;
- it has been determined that you no longer require the service;
- your behaviour has become too difficult for the service;
- your care needs exceed the capacity of the service to cater for them;
- Connect: Inner West determines that another client should have priority of access to the service in question;
- concerns about the health or safety of you, the staff or other clients.



Contacting us

You can contact the office by visiting in person (by appointment only) at:

Unit C, 6 Carrington Road, Marrickville, NSW 2204

By email at **admin@connectinnerwest.org.au**

Or by phone on **02 9558 6800**

We are open every weekday, 8am to 5pm (excluding public holidays).

If you phone at a particularly busy time our staff may be on other calls so please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. If you need to tell us about a change to a booking out of business hours, also leave a message.

From time to time we will send out important information on upcoming events via text message. You need a mobile phone to access these alerts, so please be sure to provide the office with these details.



Follow us on Facebook

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook to keep track of all news and upcoming events. We also share pictures and stories from various outings that you can share with family and friends. **<https://www.facebook.com/connectinnerwest.org.au>**

Get there with care.

We provide community
transport in Sydney's
vibrant Inner West.

Helping you get where
you need to go.



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