



# —○ Moving the community of Mount Barker with **On Demand Public Transport**

A 12-month trial supported by the South Australian Government which aims to encourage developments in emerging and innovative transport options.



Government of South Australia  
Department for Infrastructure  
and Transport





**The Mount Barker trial, part of the South Australian Government's Future Mobility Lab, has proven to be one of the most successful On Demand deployments in Australia.**

The project has proven that the Mount Barker community will embrace new technology and service types, creating opportunities to grow On Demand and to introduce new micro-mobility options into transport ecosystems.



## What is On Demand transport?

On Demand transport is any form of transport where the day-to-day services are influenced by the demand of the users. Passengers are in control of their journeys and use the service when and where they wish to travel, replacing fixed transport services. An On Demand bus will pick you up near your home or a convenient nearby location, and take you to where you want to go within the On Demand area.

These flexible, non-regular routes encourage the use of public transport by providing mobility options for all, in areas where daily demand is variable. On Demand services can connect passengers with other public transport hubs, or take them directly to their destinations, enhancing the mobility of the community within the service area.





OVER  
**95%**  
OF CUSTOMERS  
BOOK THROUGH THE  
KEORIDE APP



OVER  
**80,000**  
TRIPS IN 12 MONTHS



**97%**  
CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION



FASTEST GROWING ON  
DEMAND SERVICE IN  
AUSTRALIA WITH OVER

**3,704**

TRIPS DELIVERED IN THE FIRST  
MONTH OF SERVICE

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"DIT Transport Minister"




The Mount Baker On Demand trial was launch in January 2020 and delivered by bus operator Keolis Downer.

Mount Barker is one of the fastest growing suburbs with a population of over 37,000 in 2020 and an expected forecast population growth of 47% by 2036. Mount Barker was the perfect location to trial On Demand transport to service the unmet mobility needs of a growing population.

The On Demand service provides first and last-mile connections to the Adelaide Metro network and creates stronger mobility links in Mount Barker. The service is operated from Keolis Downer's SouthLink Depot in Mount Barker and delivered the trial under the following specifications:

Service specifications and design



LOCATION

Mount Barker,  
South Australia  
Service area

On Demand zone map.  
Mount Barker





VEHICLES

4 x Mercedes Sprinters  
12 seaters and  
1 x Wheelchair  
Accessible Vehicle  
(WAV) Rosa







## DRIVERS

12 trained and  
accredited drivers



## APP BOOKING

**Customers can download the Keoride App from the Apple or Google App Store.**

When making a trip plan using the Keoride App (a VIA platform), they are able to search for locations and drop pins to plan their trip.

Before confirming their booking, customers are presented with the fare, pickup time, and directions to the pickup location.

All bookings are monitored by the operations team who have a clear line of sight into all potential bookings being made by customers, both pre-booked and real time.

This ensures the best possible customer experience.



## HOURS OF OPERATION

**The service operates  
7 days a week on:**

- Weekdays: 6am-9pm
- Weekends: 9am-7pm
- Public holidays: 9am-7pm



## CALL CENTRE

Customers can call **1300 642 604** to book a ride or contact the Keoride team during operating hours to answer any questions they may have.



## FARE COST

**Fare costs were initially \$1.50 for adults and \$1 for concessions, including seniors and then aligned to and integrated with Metro ticket fares.**

Payments are made through on board MetroCard validators, or by credit card/debit card in the Keoride App.





## The Mount Barker On Demand Trial surpassed every set patronage target across the 12 months of operations.

Targets were set based on contemporary performance of similar trials within Australia. During the high point of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Mount Barker On Demand service still attracted a customer base above the targets of the trial.

The service's strong patronage is testament to the variety of uses it serves within the local community, including:

- a direct connection to and from the Mount Barker public transport Park'n'Rides;
- a fast and efficient link to the Mount Barker Central precinct for work, travel, and errands, with
- a stronger link to the broader community, enabling residents to travel more freely to see friends and family.

Customer Insight Surveys were conducted to determine customer take up and satisfaction and to understand community sentiment towards On Demand services and fixed bus services.

As part of the surveys, respondents were asked to provide their preference between On Demand and Fixed Route bus services. 78% of respondents preferred On Demand services. This result is consistent with patronage distribution in Mount Barker, where On Demand accounts for 70% of local trips (including On Demand, 838 and 839).





82,000

TOTAL PATRONAGE



97%  
CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION



Less than  
15-mins  
AVERAGE WAIT TIMES

RIDE DURATION

6.8 mins

106m

AVERAGE WALK  
DISTANCE.





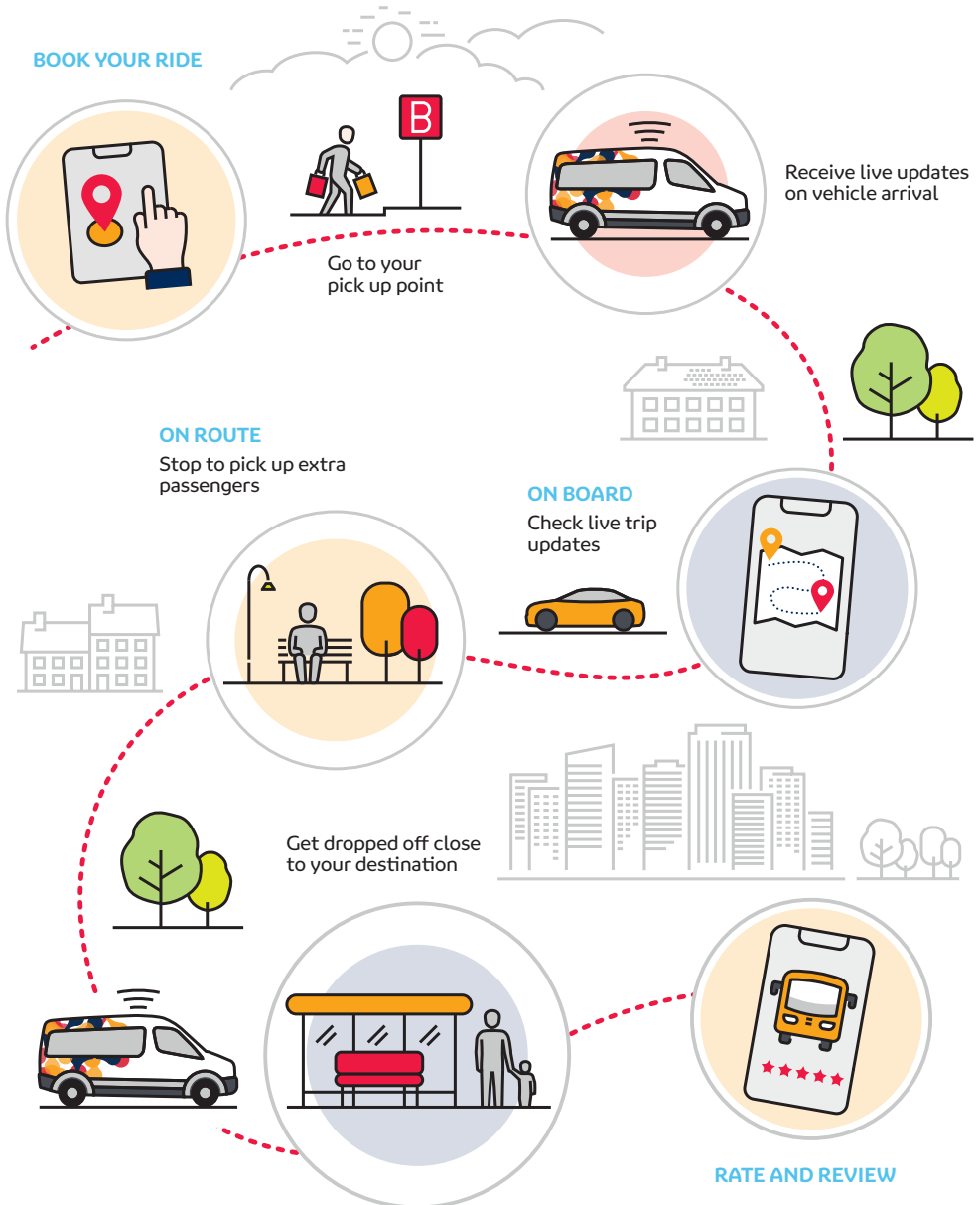
## Thinking like a passenger

**T**he aim of the trial was to create a customer journey which drove positive rider experiences and a sustained growth in patronage. The following elements had significant importance to the trial success.

- Easy ways to book a trip via the app or phone
- Customers could track the bus and know when and where it was arriving
- Limit wait time to a max of 15 minutes
- Limit walking distance to a max of 100m
- <10% late services delivered



# Customer On Demand Journey





# Service Development and Operational Performance

**T**hroughout the project several service changes were implemented to improve operational performance

- Within the first 4 weeks of operation, we serviced 3,704 passengers which was more than double the expected monthly patronage.
- Door to door access was provided for vision impaired and disabled passengers.
- Metro bus service information was integrated into the app.
- Services were optimised to provide first and last mile services to metro Park'n'Rides.
- Safe and frequently used pick up points were established.
- Vehicle optimisation was monitored to meet customer usage patterns.
- Service area expanded to include Totness Park to suit customer demand.
- Service hours expanded to 6 am on weekdays and until 7pm on Saturdays.

To ensure the community were using the service to connect to the Park'n' Rides, 'Back to Work' flyers were distributed into

specific Park'n'Ride base zones of Mount Barker. This assisted in the overall growth of 15% of the total amount of trips to the Park'n'Rides by the end of the trial.

During COVID-19, the service reduced seating capacity to ensure social distancing and contract tracing was provided through the Keoride App. This ensured that a safe and reliable essential transport service was available to the Mount Barker community.







**3,704 trips** in the first four weeks of operations.

Growth of **15% Park'n'Rides**





## Continual optimisation of the service

**Due to customer demand, the service area was expanded to include nearby Littlehampton and Nairne, increasing the service area by 50%.**

This change was implemented from 18 January 2021, after the initial 12-month trial finished. On Demand vehicles and total hours were increased to manage the additional patronage and longer trips from the expanded areas. This ensured high-quality customer experience was maintained. Keolis Downer has the ability to change the service parameters to increase efficiency, this was considered with the extended service area.

### INTEGRATION INTO THE ADELAIDE METRO FARE STRUCTURE

In extending the service area, the Adelaide Metro fare structure was integrated with the On Demand services, giving passengers access to full MetroCard benefits. Credit card payments within the On Demand service are also available to mirror image the Adelaide Metro two-hour transfer. The credit card two-hour transfer is only available from On Demand to On Demand, not onto Adelaide Metro services.

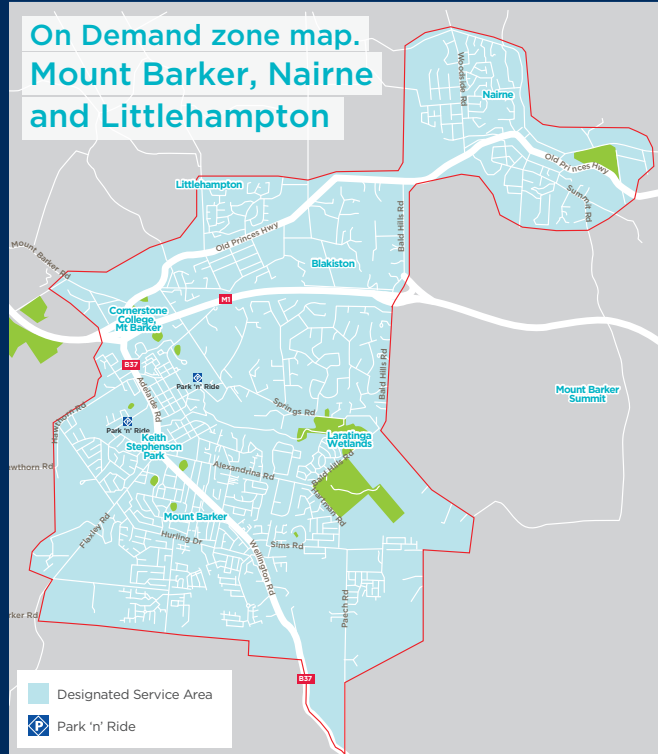
To manage the additional patronage and with the inclusion of Adelaide Metro fares, the fleet utilised for the On Demand service

was updated. We retained four Mercedes Sprinter 12 seater vehicles and introduced two flat floor 28 seater BCI Promas to the fleet. The BCI Promas allowed greater flexibility for transporting children under 5 on the service and more convenient access for wheelchair and low mobility passengers.

The trial extension provided DIT and Keolis Downer the opportunity to refine the service, meet the service hours and identify the best suited vehicle types, whilst still providing a successful and cost efficient On Demand service to the community of Mount Barker and surrounding suburbs.



## On Demand zone map. Mount Barker, Nairne and Littlehampton





## Key lessons and success factors

On Demand transport is so much more than apps and algorithms. Like any transport mode, when implemented effectively On Demand services provide a cost-effective solution to transform the way customers access and safely use wider public transport networks.

- The Mount Barker service zone included several factors to support the use case: high density housing, a growing population and lack of first and last mile mobility options for community transit and to park and rides.
- Flexible service design specifications enabled changes to wait time, walking distance and detour time/distance, maximising customer satisfaction.
- Fleet selection and size suited the narrow streets and urban form while ensuring for accessibility for the aged or disabled.
- Flexible contract arrangements enabled scaling and continued optimisation of the On Demand service.
- Integration of AdelaideMetro bus services in the Keoride app optimised trip planning and booking.
- Integration of AdelaideMetro ticketing increased trips to park'n'rides, reducing car use.
- Provided dynamic route algorithms and various seamless payment methods, making it easy to use for customers and drivers.
- Well-trained drivers resulted in customers continuously rating drivers as one of the top reasons they loved the On Demand service.
- Identification of service hot spots enabled a bestofke, data driven approach to mobility for customers in the service area.
- Community engagement through social media, surveys and through the app provided insights into customer satisfaction and key performance indicators.



\*72%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS  
WOULD HAVE USED A CAR TO  
TRAVEL BEFORE THE TRIAL

\*89%  
OF SURVEY  
RESPONDENTS WOULD  
USE THE SERVICE  
REGULARLY IF IT WAS  
PERMANENT

\*47%  
OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS USE THE  
SERVICE WEEKLY

\*86%  
OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS  
AGREE THAT KEORIDE BENEFITS  
THE COMMUNITY

\*Customer Insight Survey findings, April 2020



