Coffs Harbour's automated shuttle first in the world to provide on demand service in an independent living village

BusBot is now operating in Toormina's Marian Grove Village and is the first automated shuttle in the world to provide an on demand service in an independent living village.

It is the first automated vehicle in Australia to integrate with an on-demand smartphone app, powered by leading developer of on-demand shared mobility solutions, Via.

The Village is home to Phase 2 of the three-phase BusBot project after a hugely successful nine-week run on the Northern Breakwall over the summer.

"This trial is about understanding how automated vehicles can improve transport options in rural and regional communities. It's about answering questions like - how will they work? What benefits will they provide? What do we need to do to put the infrastructure and technology in to support their operations?" Managing Director of Busways, Byron Rowe, said.

"The on demand element of Phase 2 will definitely answer some of these questions."

Marian Grove – part of the Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged organisation - is home for 68 to 98-year-olds, providing a valuable test case to understand the mobility needs of an older community.

"Community participation is essential to some of the lessons we hope to learn in Phase 2 such as how the vehicle meets various mobility needs, how an older community interacts with the technology, and how the community accepts driverless connected technology as a feasible transport option."

The neighbourhood provides a low speed, light traffic, private area to test new functions of the vehicle – such as introducing virtual traffic lights.

"Phase 2 has been an extremely exciting phase of the project where we have seen new technology integrations trialled for the first time, and it's happening here in Coffs Harbour," Mr Rowe said.

CEO of Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged, Michael Darragh, said he believes the automated vehicle has brought happiness to the older generation.

"This is the dawn of a new age in assistive technologies that are now promoting greater mobility, flexibility and independence for the senior sector. In an era where isolation and loneliness are significant risks for many seniors, this safe and effective transport system is helping to keep the community connected and engaged which is great," he said.

The Coffs Harbour Automated Vehicle Trial is a joint venture between the NSW Government's Smart Innovation Centre, local bus operator Busways, Coffs Harbour City Council, vehicle manufacturer EasyMile, and On Demand technology provider Via.

To follow the BusBot journey:

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: @BusBotAU. **Website:** www.busbot.com.au

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Project partners and supporters

EasyMile

EasyMile is a pioneer in driverless technology and smart mobility solutions.

The fast-growing start-up develops software to automate transportation, revolutionising passenger and goods transportation. It has already deployed 230 driverless projects with more than 380,000 people transported over 400,000km. Clients include the world's largest transport operators, city authorities, airports, corporations, business parks, and universities.

EasyMile has a global presence with headquarters in Toulouse (France) and regional offices in Denver (USA), Berlin (Germany), Adelaide (Australia) and Singapore. The Company employs over 170 highly-skilled and passionate employees.

EasyMile will supply an EZ10 AV for the trial and participate in the Steering Committee, bringing their insights and expertise from global projects.

"Driverless vehicle technology has huge potential to improve the way we live. For the past four years, EasyMile has demonstrated its leadership in deploying reliable and safe autonomous systems. This new BusBot trial in Marian Grove Independent Living Village will establish autonomous shuttles as a new mobility solution for the ageing population," Managing Director of Australia and New Zealand, Greg Giraud, said.

Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged

Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged is a dynamic, innovative aged care Organisation offering quality, inspirational living experiences to its resident community.

The vision of Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged is to offer excellent care to the Aged in a nurturing environment where the dignity of the residents, carers and families is recognised and affirmed.

SCCA strives to offer its residents an optimum quality of life, encompassing care, lifestyle opportunities, spiritual and emotional support via its dedicated and passionate team of staff and volunteers.

Marian Grove Independent Living Village, a part of the Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged not for profit organisation, was established over 25 years ago. Set within 27 acres of landscaped award winning gardens and surrounded by a bushland sanctuary, Marian Grove is a vibrant, happy community, with a great reputation and an enviable resident lifestyle.

Via

Via will lend support to the project where residents of Marian Grove Retirement Village will have the opportunity to utilise an on-demand service that enables a customised transport solution, putting public transport in the individual's hands.

"At Via we believe the future of autonomous transportation is a system of self-driving, on-demand vehicles that provide low-cost, efficient, and safe shared rides," co-founder and CEO of Via, Daniel Ramot, said.

"We've built the world's most powerful on-demand operating system, seamlessly integrating with public transit infrastructure to redefine the way people move around their communities, and we're delighted to be working with the BusBot team to launch this ground-breaking service."

Papercast

Papercast is a leader in solar powered e-paper bus stop passenger information display systems. We work with public transport agencies and bus operators around the world looking for an innovative, future-proof and easy to implement solution to deliver real-time and other service information to passengers at bus stops.

"This initiative has the potential to transform the way communities think about and use public transport, and we are delighted to be involved with this cutting-edge service," comments Robert Bicket, CEO at Papercast.

"We believe that engaging passengers with valuable service information is at the heart of future transport, and this trial takes a major step forward with a two-way information flow at the point of travel. Leveraging Papercast e-paper real-time bus stop display, along with advanced interactive and survey features, will help us to shape the most successful model for autonomous transportation of the future".

Media Release Ends

Media contact:
Jade Aliprandi
Communications Officer
Phone: 9497 1943
Email: jaliprandi@busways.com.au