

Finland's Mobility as a Service Legislation

By **Audrey Quicke**

The Finnish Act on Transport Services frames transport as a whole system, rather than single and separate services – allowing public, active and shared transportation to compete with private vehicle ownership in terms of flexibility and convenience.



Above: Multiple travel modes in Helsinki, Finland¹

The concept of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) was pioneered by Finnish academics and pursued by the Finnish Government, including through legislative reform. A key element of MaaS is the integration of multiple transport modes into one service. To facilitate this, MaaS usually involves a digital transport service such as an app that allows users to plan, book and pay for various transport modes (including buses, trains, walking, ride sharing, cycling, car hire, and on demand-public transport).²

With MaaS trials currently underway in Australia, the Finnish Government's approach provides an example of what a national regulatory framework for MaaS could look like.

Finland was the first country to pass legislation designed to enable MaaS-based transportation.³ The Finnish Act on Transport Services first entered into force in 2018 and was carried out in multiple stages.⁴ It consolidates existing transport legislation and enables the digitalisation of transport services. By positing mobility as a single service, the Finnish Government aims to enable streamlined, safer transportation and significant emissions reductions.⁵

MaaS is a core part of Finland's plans to decarbonise transport and decrease personal vehicle use.⁶ The Finnish Government

aims to halve domestic transport emissions by 2030, and achieve carbon neutral transportation by 2045.⁷ Along with electrification and efficiency improvements, MaaS forms part of Finland's transport decarbonisation strategy.⁸ Encouraging a shift from personal vehicle use to public and active transport may also alleviate other negative externalities of private vehicle use such as traffic congestion and air pollution.

One of the most prominent MaaS pilot projects in the world is Whim – a MaaS app established and launched in Helsinki, Finland in 2017.⁹ The Whim app covers public transport, shared bikes and cars, and taxis, and offers two payment options: pay as you go services or monthly season tickets. Since the launch of Whim, the number of MaaS users in Helsinki has increased, prompting some to give up their personal vehicle.¹⁰

The successful implementation of MaaS relies on a number of factors, including transport services and infrastructure, data sharing and openness between transport operators, willingness to participate from citizens, and policy regulation and legislation to support MaaS.¹¹

According to the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications, the aim of the Act on Transport Services "is to provide the users with better transport services and to increase freedom of choice in the transport market."¹²

The Act removes barriers to MaaS development by regulating liability, data use, safety and privacy.¹³ It opens up data, by requiring transport service providers to make ticketing functionality available to third-parties, and grants access to data including timetables and prices. It also consolidates relevant transport legislation – resulting in streamlined regulation of the training, operator permits, licenses and professional qualifications of transport staff.¹⁴

Consumer research suggests MaaS could also prove a popular transport service in Australia. A survey conducted by the iMove Cooperative Research Centre reveals clear interest in MaaS and on-demand transport in Australia.¹⁵ Multiple MaaS trials are currently underway or recently concluded, including a MaaS trial in Sydney¹⁶ and ODIN PASS – trialled by University of Queensland staff and students.¹⁷

The Australian Productivity Commission's report on public transport pricing notes that 'MaaS will not be a simple transition' and suggests 'there may be a role for a national regulatory framework'. The Productivity Commission suggests that while MaaS is not yet a proven transport solution, Australian governments should position themselves to control its inevitable development.¹⁸

Australian Governments seeking to take a leading role in the development of MaaS can look to Finland as a reference case in MaaS legislative and regulatory framework development.

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- ² Arias-Molinares and García-Palomares (2020) *The Ws of MaaS: understanding mobility as a service from a literature review*, *International Association of traffic and Safety Sciences Research*, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0386111220300455>
- ³ Future Mobility Finland (2022) *MaaS – Customer at the Centre*, <https://futuremobilityfinland.fi/vision/mobility-as-a-service/>
- ⁴ Future Mobility Finland (2022) *The Act on Transport Services – Mobility is a Service*, <https://futuremobilityfinland.fi/cases/the-act-on-transport-services-mobility-is-a-service/>
- ⁵ Ibid
- ⁶ Labee et al. (2022) *The implications of Mobility as a service for urban emissions*, Transport Research Part D: Transport and Environment, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1361920921004235>
- ⁷ Ministry of Transport and Communications (2021) *Comments invited on the Roadmap for fossil-free transport – three phases towards climate friendly mobility*, <https://www.lvm.fi/en/-/comments-invited-on-the-roadmap-for-fossil-free-transport-three-phases-towards-climate-friendly-mobility-1252096>
- ⁸ OECD (2021) *Innovative mobility services in Finland*, <https://www.oecd.org/climate-action/ipac/practices/innovative-mobility-services-in-finland-bc4ce864/>
- ⁹ Arias-Molinares and García-Palomares (2020) *The Ws of MaaS: understanding mobility as a service from a literature review*, *International Association of traffic and Safety Sciences Research*.
- ¹⁰ OECD (2021) *Innovative mobility services in Finland*.
- ¹¹ Goulding and Kamargianni (2018) *The Mobility as a Service Maturity Index: Preparing Cities for the Mobility as a Service Era*, Proceedings of 7th Transport Research Arena TRA 2018, Vienna, Austria, https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10063087/1/Contribution_10902_fullpaper.pdf
- ¹² Finnish Government (2018) *Act on Transport Services to cover the entire transport system*, Media Release, <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/koko-liikennejarjestelma-mukaan-liikennepalvelulakiin>
- ¹³ Future Mobility Finland (2022) *The Act on Transport Services – Mobility is a Service*.
- ¹⁴ Finnish Government (2018) *Act on Transport Services to cover the entire transport system*, Media Release.
- ¹⁵ iMove (2018) *Mobility as a Service: Does Australia want it?* <https://imoveaustralia.com/news-articles/personal-public-mobility/maas-australian-readiness/>
- ¹⁶ iMove (2021) *Sydney MaaS trial: Design, implementation, lessons, the future*, <https://imoveaustralia.com/project/project-outcomes/sydney-maas-trial-final-report/>
- ¹⁷ The University of Queensland (2021) *App trial at UQ to put transport options in the palm of your hand*, <https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2021/07/app-trial-uq-put-transport-options-palm-of-your-hand>
- ¹⁸ Productivity Commission (2021) *Public Transport Pricing*, 167, <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/public-transport/public-transport.pdf>
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