



**Standing Committee
On Planning and Environment
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA CITY 2601**

GPO Box 158
CanberraACT 2601

Telephone
(02) 6205 0632

www.youth.act.gov.au

Youth Advisory Council - Bus Submission

The Youth Advisory Council is a body made up of members currently ranging from 16 to 24 years. We report to the Minister for Children and Young People, Ms Katy Gallagher, on a number of topics, issues, queries and ideas that we believe affect the youth of Canberra. As such we thought it important to put together a submission to the Committee on this topic.

A large number of young people in Canberra use public transport to get to school, university, work, between Civic and home, to get to medical appointments, to shop and for a number of other reasons.

At present, the Youth Advisory Council does not believe that Action is meeting community needs, especially for young people, with their bus services. A great number of buses run to service workers in peak hour times, whilst this may suit some College and School students, it does not meet the needs of many university students nor those casual workers, young mothers, carers and a vast number of other groups who travel outside these peak times. We believe that timetables need to be re-assessed again to ensure that groups other than workers are catered for in Canberra.

At the Youth Advisory Council we have heard a number of times that buses to the Tuggeranong area are completely inadequate. Many commuters have to get two or three connecting buses to get to their destination. These routes need to be looked at and the community consulted on which routes they believe should be available to them and their families.

The other major issue is buses to and from Civic on Friday and Saturday nights. Most young people are forced to catch taxis home, if they miss their bus, which often means blowing the budget they had set up for the week or fortnight. Buses from Civic at night often only go out to the bus interchanges anyway, making it too hard for people to get home from there.

The Youth Advisory Council would like to see the "Night Rider" bus initiative, which runs during the summer months, extended to a year round service to enable people to get around Canberra without the major expense of taxis.

The other issue that the Youth Advisory Council wishes to raise is the safety at bus interchanges. Over recent months there have been a number of reports of

personal robberies, assaults and dangerous behaviour in these places. As part of any Action upgrade we believe that all interchanges would need to be addressed.

We received the following post on our Youth InterACT website on this very issue in April 2007 from Katrina, a concerned youth of Canberra:

"The bus interchanges around the ACT are certainly not as safe as they could/should be. I think that this is stating the obvious and it's not really going to do anything by complaining, but instead working on ideas that could help this issue.

Issue No.1

Everyone knows that bus interchanges are the ideal place for the criminals to commit their crimes. By installing security cameras at venues such as these, the police would have a much higher chance at catching the people who cause trouble at bus interchanges. Result: Increase of safety. Why: Because the people who cause trouble will be locked behind bars.

Issue No.2

Due to recent laws, people are not allowed to smoke or consume alcohol within so many metres of a public place. This is a regular/everyday happening around the bus interchanges. Although being around a smoker, waiting for your bus to come, seems harmless, it is quite the opposite. You can still contract cancers and diseases from passive smoking. Being around someone who's consuming alcohol at a bus interchange, who cares, it's not going to do you any harm. Your wrong, people consuming alcohol at a public place now, are the trouble makers, and if they keep on drinking, their going to get drunk. Then there's something to be worried about, they could follow you home or decide that they would like to hurt you. To prevent these sorts of occurrences from happening so frequently, I believe that there should be clear signs stating what you can not do at a bus interchanges, along with this there should be a penalty."

As you can see Katrina makes some very good points.

As a Council, we would like to see more security measures at all interchanges. Whether these be through the use of security cameras, monitoring by private security agencies during Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, or more Police patrols (on foot or actually driving through the interchanges) we are not sure what would work.

There are also some major issues with people smoking, drinking and doing drugs in these areas where young people can be either influenced or feel threatened by

this behaviour. It is our hope that any increased security measures would help stamp out this behaviour so young people will feel safe whilst catching public transport.

This is our very short submission but we hope that the Committee sees some merit in our input and suggestions. Any of our Council would be available for further comment if necessary.

Regards

Kristy Pope
Council Member