

Sub37 Blemings.txt

From: Rosemary Blemings [roseble@tpg.com.au]
Sent: Thursday, 17 May 2007 5:03 PM
To: Committees
Subject: ACTION BUS SERVICES

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Standing Committee's inquiry into ACTION bus services. My comments follow:

a.. I understand that for decades, if not longer, it's been the case that operators are unable to recoup the cost of running public transport systems by charging passengers corresponding fares. Public transport in a city like Canberra is therefore subsidised by government funding. Perhaps there needs to be a shift in calculation that incorporates the cost benefits of having greater numbers of people using ACTION rather than their polluting, traffic-jam making-cars.

b.. At the same time is there a realisation that Canberra is a car-focussed city & that many of its citizens see their cars as an extension of their egos. As an ideal, increased bus-patronage is constantly battling these two facts. It is just not practicable for many people to use buses as their after-work routines usually involve collecting children, carrying goods & attending meetings etc.

c.. With reference to the interchanges I would suggest that, with Belconnen in particular, there needs to be a safer track for people going to the Mall. I cannot understand what planners were thinking of when they sent pedestrians, by design, through the car park to reach the shops. Drivers are far less patient & observant than they were then so the risk to pedestrians is significantly increased. Why can't more use of the Mall's balcony on the east side, be made?

d.. Rather than even plan to move the Belconnen interchange wouldn't it be cheaper to considerably increase security especially at times (which must be known statistically) when troublesome behaviour is most prevalent?

e.. Wouldn't it also be cheaper to give the place a severe concrete-scrub, clean & re-paint? If young people were encouraged to contribute painting this might reduce future graffiti & vandalism. The 'plastic' panels could be replaced to aid in the face-lift, especially the arched roof panels which show the age of the whole structure more than anything.

f.. I have heard several stories of people driving to Civic & returning home because they couldn't find a parking spot. This suggests that there are many people 'out there' for whom the logic or alternative of catching a bus has not yet sunk in. (Clearly there are some for whom mobility is still a problem). Perhaps there's a need for a team of volunteer ambassadors who could introduce new passengers to the procedures of bus travel? It does take a few journeys to get the hang of it all even if one has some self-confidence.

g.. I think it is vital that ACTION utilise the skills of its many empathetic staff to go out there & interview passengers about the service. I'd ask that the drivers be scheduled to do this as most of them are brilliant "people-persons" & relate very well with the huge range of passengers they meet. I would not advocate asking "consultants" to do this as their questions would probably come across as cold & clinical compared to a "chat" with a driver.

h.. As a retired person I appreciate that I have more TIME to utilise ACTION services than thousands of others do. As I see it we have an excellent service here in Canberra, with professional & empathetic staff. What really needs to happen is a radical change to the economic system that allows people to have more time, less frenetic lives, staggered working hours & an appreciation that when there are glitches they are usually caused by 'human error'.

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