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The Secretary,
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment,
ACT Legislative Assembly,
Canberra

Dear Sir,

A recent letter to the Editor of The Canberra Times by Member for Brindabella Mick Gentleman (published on 25 April 2007), indicates that the following comments are addressed to the appropriate Committee for consideration.

My concern relates to ACTION bus timetables generally.

It is not uncommon for a bus to be running early or late at a particular bus stop. An early bus, that is three or four minutes or more at any particular bus stop, could result in a person missing that bus. With the present suburban timetable of hourly bus services during off-peak times, a missed bus could result in a missed appointment or at best one hour late for an appointment.

My suggestion to assist in keeping to the timetable is that at nominated bus stops on any particular service, the bus driver be required to wait until the scheduled time of departure from that particular stop. I have noticed that this does occur on the Sunday timetable route 300 leaving Woden for Tuggeranong at 8.58am. When the bus is running early it waits at Erindale until the scheduled departure time of 8.43 at that stop. I have not noticed this happening on any other bus service in the Weston Creek area, with which I am most familiar.

Concerning late arrivals, unless the bus is particularly late an appointment can generally be managed. However, where a connecting bus is involved the present timetable is often very tight and a delay of only a few minutes can mean missing the connection and therefore missed appointment. For example, route 315 on weekdays leaves Tuggeranong at 3.11pm to arrive at Woden at 3.30pm. The connecting bus from Cooleman Court leaves Woden at 3.31pm. One minute is not sufficient time to alight from one bus let alone walk to the connecting bus. Could not the timetable allow at least 5 minutes between arrival and departure times? I am particularly concerned with this particular connection because my 12 year old grand daughter relies on these two services to travel from Melrose High School to Waramanga.

I make these two suggestions at this time as I understand the whole Action network will be reviewed.

I must add to the many protests which have already been raised concerning the reduction in the number of bus services from 4 December 2006. The reduction is completely at odds with attempts to reduce the number of vehicles on ACT roads. Fewer bus services means more cars on the roads, the need for more parking areas and more air pollution. I strongly recommend not simply a return to the previous bus timetables but to an increase in the previous services.

Yours faithfully

(John Hardwick)