



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Environment,
Planning, Transport and City Services

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the procurement and delivery of MyWay+

Submission number: 057

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Submission by Bill Gemmell to:

**Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Environment,
Planning, Transport and City Services inquiry into the
procurement and delivery of MyWay+**

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Chair and Committee Members

I welcome the *Inquiry into the procurement and delivery of MyWay+* and appreciate the opportunity to provide relevant comments.

A reliable public transport system that has broad community confidence is essential if the Australian Capital Territory is to successfully achieve both its densification and climate change policy ambitions. Delivery of such a system requires positive customer experience and community buy-in.

I am a regular user of Transport Canberra services (for over three decades), and a domestic and international traveller who uses local public transport as the preferred mode of travel in places visited. Over the last 12 months I have used at least 10 different public transport offerings, each with their own customer experience including ticketing systems. I volunteered to participate in the MyWay+ testing group prior to launch because I somewhat naively thought I would have a chance to share my experiences and influence the final product.

On balance, the Transport Canberra customer experience can probably be best summarised as Pythonesque. The MyWay+ experience just reinforces this view. It is very clear that MyWay+ is a bit like the proverbial airplane being built while it is flying. It was an immature product not fit for purpose at launch, and with progressive improvements only part of the system is now fit for purpose, and it is not certain from day-to-day which parts will be functional. This indicates there has been very clear governance failures, with associated risk management strategies being relegated to some sort of “tick a box” exercise.

I would humbly suggest that the advice the Government is receiving from the Directorate is likely to be flawed and perhaps the Government needs to consider appointing an external advisory committee or appointing a “critical friend” outside the Directorate to examine the material being provided.

Other contributors will comment on the detail aspects of MyWay+ from their experiences. I will now comment from my own experiences. Key issues I have observed:

- The customer reaction to MyWay+ is resignation and acceptance, that once again a sub-optimal solution has been foisted on the captive market, with those who do not use public transport having heard the experiences and strengthening their resolve to stay away.
- Multiple options for “tapping on” for a journey is confusing, and the complexity offers multiple points of potential failure;
- Related to my previous point, the choice to introduce the QR code option is perplexing. I have observed QR codes being used in some systems in Britain, but they are used to enable interoperability between operators. If the QR code feature is to enable future interoperability between Transport Canberra, NSW Trainlink and CDC Canberra Services that would

be admirable. However, I do not believe any conversation of this nature has occurred.

- Further on QR codes, there is insufficient guidance on how to use it and no dedicated signage or tray for placing the device so the onboard equipment can reliably read the code. The lag for QR codes to be processed on boarding must also impact on schedules and customer and driver frustration.
- The unique journey planner adds no discernible value and provides travellers with erroneous advice including not displaying all route options or suggesting circuitous journeys. As an alternative, I just use one of a number of readily available apps designed for journey planning, but cannot understand why the live data is not available for integrating into these apps.
- The placement of on-board display units on buses makes it very difficult for passengers to read the screens. This can be an issue when someone is going to somewhere they are unfamiliar with, or of an evening on vehicles with windows covered in advertising hoardings. This is compounded by the lack of audible on-board next stop announcements
- The card readers at some light rail stops have been positioned so that the outcome of a “tap-on” attempt cannot be seen at certain times due to excessive glare. I have personally experienced this issue at Mitchell and Dickson light rail stops.
- Even though I signed up for testing, I was able to use a MyWay+ equipped bus only 4 or 5 times throughout the testing period. Most buses I caught just did not have the equipment installed. I suspect this would be similar for many of the other testers as well.

Other related matters

I think conducting this inquiry is useful and hope that it is the beginning of a series of inquiries into the delivery of Transport Canberra services. Perhaps a Select Committee could be given such a task. I would suggest subsequent inquiries could examine:

- Is the Transport Canberra governance model “fit for purpose”?
- Is Transport Canberra well positioned to enable the Government’s Greenhouse and Densification Policies?
- Bus service planning, logistics and work practices with a sharp focus on optimising service delivery. Are there potential efficiencies?
- How could Transport Canberra effectively assist implementing the Nighttime Economy initiatives?
- How to progress interoperability with services from nearby NSW?

I would be available to discuss my input with the Committee, if requested.