

Sub49 Stein.txt

From: Patrick Stein [patrickjames@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, 19 May 2007 2:43 AM

To: Committees

Subject: Submission to ACTION Bus Inquiry

It seemed to me that bus services worked only for commuters to get to the city and town centres and students to get school - it being obvious that off peak services during the day, and particularly in the evenings, at night and on weekends are hopelessly inadequate. However I was surprised when consulting with others to hear that in many cases bus services are inadequate even for getting to work or school in peak times.

Public transport is crucial infrastructure for two reasons. 1. Sustainability. 2. Accessibility

--

Most of us would like to catch buses but dont because it is not convenient.

The most important factors are time and cost. How regularly do services run? How long does it take me get to my destination? Are there many stops? Do I take a winding route? Do I have to change bus? Does the bus get caught in traffic? How far do I have to walk to/from the bus stop? How easy is it to find a park if I drive? How much does a bus ticket cost? How much does petrol and maintenance for my car cost? How much does parking cost? ie is it quicker or cheaper to catch a bus? The answer mostly is no, particularly no it is not quicker to catch a bus. Some routes could be more direct, but the biggest problem by far is that services are much too infrequent.

Some of the other factors are: Is the bus crowded? Can I get a seat? Is it clean? Is there room for my luggage? My large luggage - prams, bicycles etc? The big issues here are that peak services are far too crowded, and that bike racks should be extended to all buses - at the moment they are not even on all the routes that they are advertised for. Also maintenance - old/dirty carpet seats, chewing gum and graffiti - could be improved.

--

Some people have no choice except to catch a bus.

The young, the elderly, the disabled, the poor - anyone who cant drive, is disadvantaged. You should not be disadvantaged because you cant drive. Some of these people are already amongst the most vulnerable in our community and are the last people that we should be further marginalising. Often they live out in the suburbs and need to access services in the city or town centres. They rely on buses. It is a matter of equity, of accessibility, that peak and off peak bus services be decent.

Young people need bus services to be more regular during the day, and in the evenings and on weekends up till midnight, and we need nightrider/flexibus services extended till at least 2am on all Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. While some primary and high school students struggle to get to school in the morning or home in the afternoon on a bus, many university and CIT students struggle to get to class during the day or home in the evenings. Many young people work late at night, or like to have dinner or coffee out with friends, and find it difficult when buses dont run. And then other young people like to have some drinks at a bar, go clubbing, or go to a party at a friends house - these people need transport, and sometimes end up drink driving.

ACTION bus services are failing young people.

--

Sustainability is a complex matter. Our lifestyles, the design of our city - it is likely that we will be required to make some changes (ie that a business as usual paradigm might not be possible). These things must be thought of holistically, and acted on in a coordinated fashion. We say that we want more people to catch

Sub49 Stein.txt

buses, but do completely contradictory things. For example we increase pay parking to encourage bus use while at the same time cutting bus services, and we scrap busway projects and build roads as a priority instead. The sustainable transport plan was a good start. It is unfortunate that it has not been followed through. Having good planners like Neil Savery (ACTPLA) is useless if decisions made in other portfolios disregard the holistic approach necessary for sustainability

--

I have not traveled widely - there are a number of other cities' public transport systems that I would like to explore in person. Some cities have decided that as a priority they want to have a good (a really good) public transport system. These cities that have made public transport a priority and resourced it accordingly, have ended up with the worlds best systems and everyone using them. These cities are now realising that it may be more efficient to fund public transport than private transport - ie the increased funding being invested in public transport is more than offset with savings from building less roads and highways (and then maintaining them).

My ideal public transport experiences have been on the trams in Melbourne and the buses in Rome. In these cities' centres catching a tram or bus is as intuitive as walking. You dont wait for a tram/bus. As you walk down the street you jump on one that is going in the same direction as you are. At the end of the street if it turns left and you want to go right, you jump off. Another tram/bus is at most only 2-3 minutes away. Public transport should be as intuitive as walking. That is my ideal.

It is interesting to note that Griffin designed Canberra as a public transport city. I believe that Griffins ideas are valid and still largely possible.

--

Patrick Stein
0407 612 557
patrickjamess@gmail.com

President Elect
SONA/RAIA
www.sona.com.au
www.architecture.com.au

Acting Secretary
2050 National Committee
www.2050.org.au

University of Canberra
School of Design and Architecture
www.canberra.edu.au

Outgoing Chair
ACT Ministers Youth Council
www.youth.act.gov.au
