2020

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Response to Assembly Resolution – Network 19 – Weekend Bus Services

Quarterly Update

Number 4

Presented by
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Minister for Transport
August 2020

ACT Government

TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN

Quarterly Update

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TRANSPORT CANBERRA AND CITY SERVICES

AUGUST 2020

Executive summary

On 17 September 2019, the ACT Government released the Transport Action Plan (the Plan) aimed at improving reliability of its weekend bus services. The Plan was developed to acknowledge and resolve that the reliability of Transport Canberra weekend bus services was not meeting the expectations of Canberrans.

In accordance with the resolution of the Legislative Assembly of 14 August 2019, the ACT Government has committed to updating the Assembly and the community on a quarterly basis on progress toward improving weekend bus service reliability, as set out in the Plan.

Under the Plan, Transport Canberra implemented an interim weekend timetable to immediately improve the reliability of weekend services from Saturday 28 September 2019. As a result, Transport Canberra is now consistently meeting its reliability target for weekend bus services. Since the beginning of November 2019, Transport Canberra has delivered 99.9% of all scheduled weekend bus services and met its target of 99.5% every weekend.

Transport Canberra will be adding 236 extra services to the Saturday timetable as part of the first stage of increases to the frequency of local bus services on weekends. From Saturday 10 October 2020, just ahead of the start of Term 4, passengers will see local bus services increase to hourly between about 6am and midday on Saturdays. To ensure reliability of these services Transport Canberra required around 820 drivers, and under a targeted recruitment campaign 84 new drivers have been employed since 28 September 2019 which has resulted in a net gain of 43 drivers after natural attrition. Transport Canberra expects to further increase the frequency of local bus services on weekends in the first half of 2021.

The ACT Government remains committed to delivering the actions set out in this Plan, to ensure that Canberrans have access to frequent and reliable public transport on weekends and, at the appropriate time, encourage more Canberrans to use our city's bus and light rail services.

1.1 Definitions – status of actions

Term	Definition
Not yet commenced	An action has 'not yet commenced' when Transport Canberra is yet to begin work on the action.
Commenced	An action has 'commenced' when Transport Canberra has begun work on the action.
On Hold	An action is 'on hold' while Transport Canberra responds to the current public health emergency.
On track	An action is 'on track' when Transport Canberra has begun work on the action and is progressing as expected.
Ongoing	An action is 'ongoing' when the action has been delivered but requires ongoing management.
Completed	An action is 'completed' when the action has been delivered.

Quarterly Update

Action	Status
Action 1 **Continuous recruitment of bus drivers**	**Ongoing** Transport Canberra commenced a 12-month recruitment round on 28 October 2019 which is due to close 27 October 2020. The four-week driver training course commences every three weeks to achieve the number of drivers required to support the Network19 changes and a return to higher levels of weekend services. From the commencement of the reduced weekend network on 28 September 2019 and until 12 June 2020, Transport Canberra recruited 84 new drivers (66 part-time and 18 casual employees). During the same period 41 drivers left Transport Canberra, resulting in a net gain of 43 drivers (41 part-time and 2 casual employees). Due to the current public health emergency (COVID-19), the driver recruitment and training program activities have been reduced to ensure social distancing measures can be upheld. Training re-commenced on 19 June 2020, with lower numbers to enable physical distancing to be adhered to.
Action 2 **Prioritise applicants interested in weekend work**	**Ongoing** Transport Canberra is prioritising candidates who express an interest in working on weekends.
Action 3 **Promoting NXTBUS for planning journeys on weekends**	**Ongoing** Transport Canberra is continuing to communicate NXTBUS as a tool for customers planning journeys on weekends through several different channels, including the Transport Canberra website, through social media and through customer service staff.
Action 4 – replace NXTBUS with new customer information systems and apps	**On track** The Government has announced that a new ticketing system will be designed to provide Canberra's public transport users with convenient and flexible payment methods and real time travel information. This system will replace the current MyWay ticketing system and real time information system, which are now outdated. The procurement and development of the new ticketing system, including new customer information systems and apps, continues to be progressed.

Action	Status
Action 5 – workforce development plan	**Ongoing** Transport Canberra is developing an updated workforce plan that reflects staffing requirements for delivering current services, as well as services planned for areas of population growth, a future bus depot at Woden and other future transport planning.
Action 6 – increased use of stand-by drivers	**Complete** Transport Canberra implemented an interim weekend timetable to immediately improve the reliability of weekend services from Saturday 28 September 2019. This timetable included shifts for stand-by drivers on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. These drivers were often utilised before COVID-19 and have proved to be an important resource in increasing weekend bus reliability.
Action 7 – encourage more drivers on weekends	**Ongoing** The *Transport Canberra Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021* is based on a weekday roster, with drivers encouraged to volunteer for weekend work. Transport Canberra has introduced improvements to the process for bus drivers to choose to work weekends, with weekend duties allocated to bus drivers earlier. Under this new process, a working draft of the weekend roster is presented to drivers two weeks prior to the weekend to be worked. Rostered drivers may elect not to work, and drivers who are not rostered may express interest in working at this time. In the following weeks, any driver is able to choose any remaining weekend work, to ensure that drivers are rostered for every service. This means that drivers are rostered to work on weekends up to two weeks ahead of time. Historical practice was to offer weekend work to drivers each week for that weekend (that is, up to six days ahead of time). Initiatives continue to be explored with drivers and union delegates.
Action 8 – consultation on potential changes to conditions for Transport Canberra bus drivers	**On track** Planning for the next bus driver and other Transport Canberra operational staff enterprise agreement will commence in 2020 in conjunction with the broader ACT Public Service approach to the development of enterprise agreements.

Action	Status
Action 9 – implement an interim weekend timetable to immediately improve reliability	**Complete** Transport Canberra implemented an interim weekend timetable to immediately improve the reliability of weekend services from Saturday 28 September 2019. As a result, Transport Canberra is now consistently meeting its reliability target for weekend bus services. Since the beginning of November 2019, Transport Canberra has delivered 99.9% of all scheduled weekend bus services and met its target of 99.5% every weekend.
Action 10 – incrementally increase weekend services to meet the Network 19 plan	**On track** The first increase to weekend services was planned in the updated timetable due to commence on 28 April 2020. Due to the public health emergency, these network changes were postponed and will now commence Saturday 10 October 2020.