



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: 108

Submitter: Name withheld

Date authorised for publication: 13 March 2025

SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO PROCURMENT AND DELIVERY OF MYWAY+

1. It appears the enquiry Committee is made up of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly with one advisor/assistant.

The Committee will be enquiring into complex contractual and technical issues, in which they personally may not have deep expertise. The Committee is thus at risk by being 'snowed' by expert submissions. A consequent risk is that of the Committee making less useful findings, with recommendations that are not as useful as they could be, or worse, damaging to public transport.

It is suggested that the Committee assure itself that it has independent third party *experts* available to it to assist the Committee to interpret and understand the complexities (or the oversimplified/biased brush-offs) in the submissions, and to be assisted in asking effective probing questions.

2. It is interesting that TC is not throwing much blame on the Contractor, despite it appearing that the Contractor, NEC, has simply failed to deliver. Likewise, NEC is not saying much about being contractually 'frustrated' or misinformed by the Principal (Transport Canberra).

This indicates the practical reality that both parties are now stuck with each other and need to maintain a working relationship.

In that regard, the consequences of a relationship breakdown would be very unhelpful. If NEC became offended and unhelpful, or even chose to walk away, what is the alternative? Likewise, if the Government used the nuclear option and sacked NEC. Realistically, a co-operative relationship needs to be maintained or MyWay+ abandoned. Replaced with what, by whom, and when? All, I imagine, very difficult, expensive, time consuming, and, very probably, a political disaster.

It is suggested that it is important that the Committee seek to maintain good contractual relations.

3. The Contract with NEC is not in front of me. In general, however, it is rarely practical to enforce liquidated damages clauses (wrongly called 'penalties' by most commentators), likewise dispute resolution by arbitration has been shown by studies to usually result in the

middle of the road decision. Focus on these types of options is unlikely to be helpful before (or often after) a relationship breakdown.

4. My personal experience of using MyWay+ was that to begin with, it was a mess. But account creation was easy, MyWay+ cards with Concession for us were ordered through the account and arrived quite quickly and pre-registered to the accounts,

When the vehicle/platform validator was working, I had no problem tapping with registered credit card, unregistered credit card, and the MyWay+ card. (I don't use mobile phone payment methods.)

The QR method however was a complete failure for me until recently, and even now is difficult and slow.

I noted that if a registered CC is used, \$1 is immediately deducted (presumably to prove the cc account), and, in my case, later reversed.

I now have now successfully used QR on both bus and Light Rail. On the bus it has to be positioned on the mounting base level, much more than the 5cm below the reader as advised by Transport Canberra. If it can be discerned, there is a tiny lit dot that needs to be roughly in the centre of the code to get a result. The QR code method is still clunky and needs much improvement to make it quick and responsive. (I have noticed it causing tapping delays on the buses, which extends stop dwell time.

For some peculiar reason, tapping on R2 services only recently became available.

5. Initially the records in my MyWay+ account of tapping were hit and miss. A surprising miss was a light rail tap off where the record said the validator location was not known (How? The Light Rail validators are physically fixed in position,)

The account has a history problem. The main page on travel history only gives the very recent. Where is the older stuff? To be found in Account History listed in a panel of various items on the main page.

One excellent thing is the MyWay+ account is now real time, (previously often the next day or later).

5. The lettering on the PIDs (passenger information displays) is a bit small and unreadable from the rear of the bus. The articulated (bendy) buses in particular need a PID in the aft section. (Note that LRVs ,Light Rail vehicles, have them right through the vehicle. So there is a precedent.)

The bus PID (image appended) in big letters has the starting point at the top. Who wants to know that? And why is it prominent? The destination is where the relevant emphasis is needed.

On circular routes the starting point is the destination and can be unhelpful.

A notable absence is PIDs at the actual bus stops. Wellington NZ does that much better. Further the few existing PIDs at the Interchanges are still not working and the City ones have not been relocated when the platforms were re-arranged.

6. The Journey Planner is worse than useless - it offers all sorts of irrelevancies and doesn't filter well. Like its predecessor, it offers unrealistic plans which one cannot dare rely on if changes of service en route are needed. A regular journey I make is appended as an example.

7. I have not successfully managed to usefully use the Next Bus. It offers too much junk and downright wrong answers. Perhaps I am not expert yet, but I shouldn't need to be.

8. Overall, my recent experience is that with a couple of glitches and clunky QR, MyWay+ is now working reasonably well. When not experimenting, I anticipate my regular method will be the MyWay+ card. The other methods represent useful backups. What is now particularly needed is better passenger information suited where appropriate to the casual, in-expert user.

9. It is noted that Melbourne is now going down a similar road with initially limited trials, and thus they have expectations of implementation issues. Transport Canberra seems therefore to not being unique in this regard.

My perception is that MyWay+ (with the exception of the QR code method as it is currently performing) is now worth persevering with.

JOURNEY PLANNER EXAMPLE

Mission: To travel from home in Spence to Hughes Community Centre to be at a function starting at 10am on a weekday.

Travel using R3 – 57 issue is that rte 57 9.30am from City arrives at Hughes at about 9.55am which, with a walk across a park, cuts it too fine. The previous service is half an hour earlier.

The alternative is to go via Woden (R3-R4-57) and arrive at Hughes, adjacent to the Centre, at 9.44am, which is ideal.

Journey Planner offer

Lve Spence R3 8.28am Arr City 9.11am change to R4 at same stop

Lve City R4 9.12am Arr Woden 9.28am change platform (walk 1min for 150m!!!)

Lve Woden 9.30am Arr Hughes 9.44am.

Above Journey Planner is ridiculous. The vagaries of driving, boarding/alighting time, loading, traffic lights, and Haydon Dr congestion make the tight connections quite impractical to rely on. In reality, I leave Spence on the previous service at 8.13am, change to an R4 somewhere between Cohen St and the City (tactics are involved here – which bus is in front is relevant), and to 57 at Woden.

I have on occasion been so delayed that I have had to take 57 from the City at 9.30am and arrive a bit late (better than 20+ minutes late if Woden connection is missed).

I have noted that the 8.28am arrival at Woden as per the Journey Planner has not always even arrived when departing on the rte 57.