



Communities @ Work Inc.

Early Childhood Centres
School Age Care
Family Day Care
Child Care Industry Support Services
Training Programs
Community and Youth Centres
Family Support
Volunteer Programs
Disability Services
Aged Care Programs
Community Transport
Behavioural Guidance
Community Development
Senior Drop In Meals
Respite Groups
Case Management
Specialised Housing

Ms H Jaireth
P&E Committee Secretary
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Jaireth

Inquiry into Action Buses

Communities@Work would like to offer the following comments to the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment in their inquiry into the services provided by Action buses.

Comments from Inclusion and Professional Support

- The highest proportion of High Support Needs children in child care are in school aged care and most of these identify on the Autism Spectrum. Therefore, using buses to and from venues is not feasible for these children. e.g A child who has Autism was on an ACTION bus, did not get off the bus at their required stop and was not discovered until the bus came to the end of its run.
- Many of these children attend Special Schools or Autism Units attached to Primary Schools. Those children attending Special Schools are usually transported to a School Aged Care venue and children attending Autism Units generally tend to have care in the School Aged Care program attached to the School, which they are able to walk to.
- Unless they have chartered a bus specifically for an excursion during vacation care, programs who have children in wheelchairs avoid using buses to and from excursions as they find it too difficult to physically move these children in and out of the bus.
- The closure of primary schools in the ACT has had impacts on High Support needs children having to move schools, some have had difficulties in accessing schools and this may in future impact on transport as they may have to source schools which meet their learning needs further away from home.

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Comments and suggestions from our clients and staff

- There is very often a big a gap between services and older people and people with disabilities become distressed about having to wait around so long for a bus.
- People with concessions are not able to use the buses in peak times and this is difficult for them as they are not always able to make appointment times to suit these restrictions.
- It is almost impossible for people in wheelchairs to catch a bus.
- Bus stops are not always in the most appropriate places for older people who have difficulty walking up a hill or have to walk long distances to bus stops.
- Could special needs buses be used on the weekends?
- Invariably buses take off before the older person has had time to sit down.
- We understand that some people (depending on where they live) need to get three buses to reach their destination.
- There have been occasions when a bus has not turned up and some of our volunteers have experienced this which means they are unable to fulfill their volunteering commitment or missed out on attending a function.

We trust these comments will assist you with your enquiry. If we can assist you with any additional information please call me on 6288 4744.

Yours sincerely

Linda Tregonning
Executive Manager
Community Programs

16 May 2007