

Connecting with buses in Western Sydney

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Western Sydney Community Forum

Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) is a regional peak organisation that provides regional leadership, facilitates collaborative action, and develops resources to enable community organisations to effectively address issues relating to social justice and social inclusion. Western Sydney Community Forum strengthens the work of community organisations across Western Sydney to increase the capacity and resilience of disadvantaged communities.

There are over 150 members of WSCF, mainly non-government community service organisations, with government and commercial organisations as associate members. WSCF represents organisations from Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith and Wollondilly local government areas.

Funded by the Ministry of Transport, WSCF has a long involvement connecting the community sector with transport issues. WSCF currently supports or participates in the Liverpool Transport Taskforce, the Blacktown Public Transport Forum, Bankstown Public Transport Forum, and Blue Mountains Commuter Association.

Past research and projects include: *Stranded*, documenting the barriers young people experience in accessing public transport in Western Sydney; *Getting There*, a forum on improving accessibility, transport and sustainability with WSROC and Council of Social Services NSW; *Transport Disadvantage in Western Sydney* a research report with the University of Western Sydney, documenting the impact transport disadvantage has on young unemployed, sole parents, people with disabilities and older women.

WSCF has also been a regular contributor to State inquiries and reviews including the Unsworth Review, the yearly State Budget, the various IPART reviews, the NSW Metropolitan Strategy and the State Plan and the review of Health Related Transport.

Executive Summary

The Connecting with Buses project aims to support and strengthen the provision of bus services and associated infrastructure in Western Sydney.

This draft discussion paper looks at how the Metropolitan Bus Contracts between the Ministry of Transport and bus operators govern the provision of bus services in Western Sydney and considers what support stakeholders can provide to enable these contractual obligations to be met.

After considering examples of how bus services are provided elsewhere, the draft paper raises questions on how stakeholders can support the provision of bus services. Areas covered include performance of bus services, infrastructure provision, contract service levels and service planning, information systems, bus fleets and depots and reporting.

The Connecting with Buses Project aims to work with stakeholders to develop a set of initiatives that can be implemented by project participants themselves or that project participants can advocate be implemented by stakeholders who have jurisdiction over those initiatives.

Questions for consideration

- Q.1 What impact will the price of petrol have on the community in Western Sydney and on the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? How could this project address those impacts?
- Q.2 Is it helpful to base consideration of how stakeholders can support the provision of bus services around the Metropolitan Bus Contracts?
- Q.3 How are Federal Government programs and agencies supporting the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? Are there ways they could offer more support? Are there other programs or initiatives that are, or could, support the provision of bus services? What can stakeholders do to support that happening?
- Q.4 How are State Government programs and agencies supporting the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? Are there ways they could offer more support? Are there other programs or initiatives that are, or could, support the provision of bus services? What can stakeholders do to support that happening? Should other targets be set?
- Q.5 How is local government in Western Sydney currently supporting the provision of bus services? Is there more that could be done? What do we need to do to make this happen?
- Q.6 How are we going with providing bus priority? Are there other initiatives we could take to give buses priority on our roads?
- Q.7 How well are stakeholders providing bus amenities in Western Sydney? Can we do more? How would we fund more infrastructure?
- Q.8 How is the community currently involved in supporting bus infrastructure in Western Sydney? Can we do more?
- Q.9 Do our current car parking strategies undermine the viability of our bus services? Are there any changes to these strategies that are worthy of consideration?
- Q.10 How do the densities of Western Sydney compare with those of Vancouver? Is there scope for our services to match those of Vancouver's? Can our densities and landuse structure change to better support public transport? How could we support this to happen?

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- Q.11 What is the impact of the provision of 400m 'as the crow flies' on residents of Western Sydney? Are there ways to ameliorate adverse impacts?
- Q.12 Has the community consultation process been effective? How have you been involved in planning for bus services? Are there other ways stakeholders could support planning for bus services?
- Q.13 What is the current status of Community Kilometres? How can we assist them to be funded and distributed equitably across Western Sydney?
- Q.14 Is there a role for flexible transport or demand responsive transport? Are there ways community transport and the route bus system can interact to combat transport disadvantage?
- Q.15 How are bus services currently meeting their performance requirements? Can stakeholders play a role here?
- Q.16 How can stakeholders support the complete alignment of private, STA and T-Way bus fares? How can stakeholders support the adoption of integrated ticketing?
- Q.17 How are Passenger Relations currently managed? Are there ways stakeholders can strengthen passenger's relations with bus services in Western Sydney?
- Q.18 How can stakeholders support improved public transport information provision?
- Q.19 How are we doing in bringing our buses to match world's best practice? How can we ensure they do?
- Q.20 What are worker's experiences of driving a bus? What support do workers need to continue to offer their vital service to the community? What can stakeholders do to assist with driver recruitment?
- Q.21 What performance measures and indicators are needed to communicate to the community that the appropriate level of service is being delivered?
- Q.22 What level of subsidy is appropriate to ensure bus services meet community needs in Western Sydney?

Q.23 What other matters do you think the Connecting with Buses Project needs to consider in order to better support the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? What other initiatives can we undertake to support bus services that are not encompassed by the Contracts?

1. Introduction

1.1 About Connecting with Buses

The Connecting with Buses Project aims to bring people together to share ideas, skills and strategies about how to strengthen the provision of bus services, and associated infrastructure, in Western Sydney, and how to increase access to those services by transport disadvantaged people.

The Project aims to achieve this by working with interested stakeholders to:

- respond to this discussion paper by developing a set of initiatives that can be implemented by project participants themselves or that project participants can advocate be implemented by stakeholders who have jurisdiction over those initiatives.

A transport symposium will be convened during this process to (hopefully) facilitate resolution of some of the debates that will inevitably arise during this process.

- create working parties and partnerships to either implement the initiatives or to advocate for their implementation by others.

1.2 Supporting bus services in Western Sydney

1.2.1 Transport disadvantage

Transport disadvantage occurs where disadvantaged populations live in an area where transport and/or other facilities and services are difficult to access or unavailable.

Western Sydney has a significantly higher number of socio-economically disadvantaged people affected by transport disadvantage in comparison with the rest of Sydney.

A research report by WSCF and the University of Western Sydney¹, found that transport disadvantage is highly concentrated in the Western Sydney region:

- Almost two thirds of transport disadvantaged people live in Western Sydney – some 700,000 people.
- The distribution of unemployed people living in transport disadvantaged areas is concentrated in Western Sydney.

Poor access to transport is a defining characteristic of poverty and social disadvantage. An inability to access transport either because of cost, availability of services or poor physical accessibility, leads to isolation from jobs, health and treatment, as well as social and recreational activity².

Cost of transport

Owning a car costs the average household about 16% of its total budget, the same amount it spends on housing and on food³.

In recent years, the cost of transport has increased dramatically. The price oil has increased rapidly, doubling from 90 cents/litre in 2003 to current prices at around \$1.70/litre⁴. Whilst a variety of reasons are offered for this, there is a growing acceptance that the discovery of new oil fields is declining whilst demand is rapidly increasing, and that consequently the price of petrol is on a permanently upward trend. A recent CSIRO report predicted a price of \$8/litre by 2018⁵.

Increased transport costs have a particularly strong impact in Western Sydney where residents are highly dependent on the private vehicle due to a lack of access to frequent public transport services. For those already on the economic margins increased fuel prices increase transport disadvantage.

A study by the Urban Research Program at Griffith University⁶ assessed the relationship between socio-economic status, household motor vehicle ownership and car dependence for work journeys to determine the location of households that were particularly vulnerable to rising prices of oil. The report found that:

high oil vulnerability is concentrated in Sydney's west, particularly in a broad area of localities south-west of Parramatta which extends along both the north-west and south-west corridors. Of particular note are the areas to the immediate west of Liverpool, Cabramatta and Fairfield which contain a large cluster of highly vulnerable localities. Similar although not as extensive concentrations of high oil vulnerability are found in Mount Druitt, Hebersham and Hassall Grove to the north west, while a small cluster of high vulnerability is present in Campbelltown.

Q.1 What impact will the price of petrol have on the community in Western Sydney and on the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? How could this project address those impacts?

1.2.2 Reducing transport disadvantage

Some studies have already raised a number of recommendations on how transport disadvantage might be reduced. The Urban Research Program's study into vulnerability to high oil prices concluded:

it is the local and small scale infrastructure, combined with high quality public transport services, linked to local centres with good walking and cycling connections, that will ultimately determine the future outcomes for oil-vulnerable communities. The humble local suburban bus stop is likely to become a more important item of community infrastructure as fuel prices increase, than any cross-harbour, cross-river or cross-city road tunnel.

The UWS and WSCF report on transport disadvantage recommended:

- Funding the development of improved accessibility and urban connectivity indicators for urban areas.
- Funding expanded local and community transport options in Western Sydney to enable them to be more responsive to the travel needs of a wider range of transport disadvantaged groups including sole parents, young unemployed people and recently arrived humanitarian entrants. A reallocation of funding for the M4/M5 electronic toll rebate system towards this endeavour would be a justifiable change of policy.
- Revision of transport subsidy schemes and concessions to provide greater fare equalisation and recognise the geographical variation in the costs of travel for disadvantaged groups.
- Reviewing the policy on the issuing of transit fines, especially to young people.
- Revising local bus routes to maximise frequency of services to health and education facilities.
- Funding local government to improve local accessibility through constructing and upgrading bus stops and shelters, foot paths, and cycleways.

This draft discussion paper uses these studies, and examples of good practice from other jurisdictions, as a starting point to generate discussion and action amongst stakeholders about practical steps that can be taken to support bus services in Western Sydney.

1.3 Structure of this discussion paper

The paper is built around the Metropolitan Bus Contracts between the Ministry of Transport and bus operators. These contracts govern the provision of bus services in Western Sydney.

In recognition of the central role the contacts play, this paper considers clauses that cover issues that have been brought to WSCF's attention over many years of working with the community.

Each chosen clause is briefly outlined and discussed in terms of how it is currently implemented. Examples of relevant good practice are given and then questions are offered to prompt discussion about ways in which project participants, and others, can support the matters covered by that clause.

Q.2 Is it helpful to base consideration of how stakeholders can support the provision of bus services around the Metropolitan Bus Contracts?

2. Transport in Western Sydney

2.1 Travel in Western Sydney

The following extract from the UWS and WSCF research report⁷ briefly outlines currently travel patterns in Western Sydney.

Travel patterns evident from the Journey to Work data from 2001 Census and the Sydney Household Travel Survey show that the vast majority of trips for both work (71%) and other purposes (90%) by Western Sydney residents are within the region itself (PPM, 2004). Only 7% of workers from Western Sydney travelled to the Sydney CBD.

A high proportion of employment in Western Sydney is located away from centres making it more difficult to access these jobs by rail transport. Employment in knowledge-based industries is concentrated in the northern region of Sydney in areas not well linked to the Western Sydney rail lines. This effectively acts as a barrier to the opportunities of Western Sydney residents, particularly young people, to gain employment in these industries.

The legacy of a gender segregated labour market and an urban transport system based largely on servicing a male 9am to 5 pm workforce is evident in differences in the work related travel patterns for women and men in Western Sydney.

The vast majority (64.3%) of working men and women in Western Sydney use a single method of travel to work, mostly by car either as a driver (57.5%) or as a passenger (6.6%) a higher proportion of men drive a car to work (62.5%) than women (51.4 %) (Gleeson, Randolph, & Holloway, 2002).

On the other hand, a greater proportion of employed women than men have to use two or three methods of travelling to work (7.3 % of women compared to 5.9% of men). Multi-mode trips were particularly high in Blacktown and Campbelltown LGAs. Although bus transport is the only mode of public transport in many areas of Western Sydney,

just 1.5 % of employed persons travel by bus to work and almost two out of three of these commuters are women. In 2001, of the people in Western Sydney who travelled to work by bus 6,190 were women compared to 3,863 men. This proportion is much lower than in Sydney overall (4.6%).

More people in Western Sydney walked to work (2.2%) or drove a truck (2.2%) than used a bus. Bus usage was highest in Baulkham Hills with 3.0% of employed persons here using only a bus to get to work, clearly a reflection of the lack of an alternative public transport mode (Gleeson, Randolph, & Holloway, 2002) but also possibly related to the M2 bus service to the Sydney CBD.

Trains are the main mode of public transport used by workers in Western Sydney with 7.4% of employed persons travelling to work by train. While slightly more men than women travel to work by train (26,859 men compared to 26,226 women) a greater proportion of employed women travel to work by train than men (8.3% of women compared to 6.6% of employed men).

These rates are also likely to be influenced by the high proportion of construction and trade related workers in Western Sydney, the majority of whom are men. A greater number and proportion of men in Western Sydney use a truck as a their method of travel to work compared to the rest of Sydney. A total of 15,834 men or 3.8% of employed males drove a truck to work in Western Sydney compared to 13,419 men or 2.3% of employed males in Sydney overall.

The bicycle, although promoted as an alternative mode of transport, is hardly used at all by women in Western Sydney as a method of travel to work. A mere 204 women, only 0.06% of employed women used a bicycle to travel to work, compared to 2,291 men (0.57%) of employed men. In the rest of Sydney, in contrast, the bicycle compares favourably with ferries and taxis as a mode for work travel with 6,726 single method travellers using bicycles (1,293 of them women) compared to 5,323 using ferries and 5,201 using taxis (Gleeson, Randolph, & Holloway, 2002).

Travel Indicator	Inner /East	NorthEast	SouthEast	Inner/ CentralWest	NorthWest	SouthWest	OuterWest	Total Sydney SD
Average number of trips per person	3.85	4.01	3.81	3.42	3.36	3.31	3.99	3.74
Private vehicle mode share (all trips) (%)	48.7	67.9	72.3	64.6	80.1	78.7	79.7	70.0
Average trip length (km)	5.7	8.2	8.4	8.0	11.8	11.9	13.7	9.5
Daily VKT per person (km)	10.1	17.9	17.6	14.1	23.2	24.0	33.3	20.0
Change in VKT per person (%) 1991-2001	-9.9	0.3	9.1	6.0	4.7	23.6	22.8	11.6

Table 1 Selected travel data for Sydney statistical division⁸

2.2 Current bus services in Western Sydney

Bus services in NSW are provided by a mix of government and private operators. In Western Sydney the majority of bus service providers are privately owned.

The focus of the NSW Government's bus reform process is on providing services for workers at peak hour. Attempts to develop more efficient services mean distances to bus stops is lengthening, making it more difficult for some people to access services. Off peak services are being cut to increase peak hour services. This strategy is likely to increase transport disadvantage.

In metropolitan Sydney the reforms include government involvement in service planning, the development of a network of strategic corridors and local route services, replacement of the Minimum Service Levels of bus operation with Service Planning Guidelines and the standardisation of ticket products ensuring that fares and concessions are consistent across the region.

2.3 Government programs impacting on buses

A wide variety of Government programs, policies and statements at the Federal, State and Local Government level impact on bus services.

2.3.1 Commonwealth Government

In a major policy development, the Rudd Government has acknowledged that the Commonwealth has a role to play in urban public transport⁹. The previous government had stated that 'urban public transport is not an area of Commonwealth responsibility'¹⁰.

Many Commonwealth programs will impact on the provision of bus services in Western Sydney:

- **Infrastructure Australia:** an advisory body recommending priorities for infrastructure funding, policies, prices and regulations.
- **Building Australia Fund:** the 2008-2009 budget allocates \$20 billion to infrastructure. It is expected that the first allocations, which will follow Infrastructure Australia's recommendations.
- **Major Cities Unit:** a new unit in the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government's folio, aims to re-establish the role of cities as economic powerhouses.
- **Australia Social Inclusion Board:** For the first time, Australia has a Minister for Social Inclusion, the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard MP. Ms Gillard has set up the Australia Social Inclusion Board This Board, which first met in May 2008, is charged with rethinking 'how policy and programs across portfolios and levels of government can work together to combat economic and social disadvantage'¹¹.
- **Garnaut Climate Change Review:** Commissioned by all Australian Governments to report on the 'impacts, challenges and opportunities of climate change for Australia'¹². A Final Report is due by 30 September 2008. States that 'climate change is a diabolical policy problem. It is harder than any other issue of high importance that has come before our polity in living memory'.
- **Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Green Paper**¹³. The Green Paper proposes that major greenhouse gas emitters be required to buy a 'pollution permit' giving them an incentive to reduce the cost of doing business by reducing pollution. The Green Paper asserts that:

the inclusion of transport emissions in the scheme would imply that consumers would see the carbon price signalled through changes in fuel costs. Such changes would be minor compared to petrol price rises over recent years as a result of increasing global oil prices.

To reduce the immediate impact on consumers and give them time adjust by doing things such as purchase more fuel efficient vehicles, the Government proposes to reduce the tax on fuel by the amount which the Carbon Reduction Scheme will increase the price. This process will be reviewed at the end of three years.

- **Senate Select Committee on Fuel and Energy:** is inquiring into the impact of higher petroleum, diesel and gas prices.

Q.3 How are Federal Government programs and agencies supporting the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? Are there ways they could offer more support? Are there other programs or initiatives that are, or could, support the provision of bus services? What can stakeholders do to support that happening?

2.3.2 State Level

- **State Plan, A New Direction for NSW:** the major planning document of the NSW Government, setting out key priorities for the NSW Government over the next 10 years and linked to budget planning processes.

Priority S6 aims to increase the share of peak hour journeys by:

- increasing the share of trips made by public transport to and from the Sydney CBD during peak hours to 75 percent (currently 72 percent)
- increasing the proportion of total journeys to work in the Sydney metropolitan region to 25 percent by 2016 (currently 20-22 percent)
- consistently meeting public transport reliability targets
- increasing the journeys to work by public transport from its current 20-22% to 25% by 2016
- that 95% of buses run on time across the network.
- targets for private buses on strategic corridors will be implemented in 2008 to align with new integrated networks. (At present, approximately 6% of total trips are taken by bus. The Bus and Coach Association has called for a target to be set of 10% by 2015¹⁴.)

Actions, underway and planned, to meet these targets are:

- implementing bus priority measures on the 43 strategic bus corridors across Sydney
- implementing the Accessible Transport Action Plan.
- improving service quality and frequency including extensions to peak hour services
- pursuing reforms to Fringe Benefit Tax to include opportunities to salary package public transport tickets
- improve passenger transport information
- better co-ordinate timetables and public transport entry and exit points.

Priority E7 aims to improve the efficiency of the road network, as measured by the travel speeds and volume of road traffic on major road corridors during peak hour. Actions underway and planned include:

- completing strategic road and bus corridors
- consider providing park and ride facilities at railway stations to make it easier to use public transport.
- **Passenger Transport Amendment (Bus Reform) Act 2004:** This Act establishes the reforms in the planning, contracting and funding of bus services in metropolitan Sydney.
- **Metropolitan Bus System Contracts:** The Metropolitan Bus System Contracts are the main mechanism by which the Ministry of Transport directs the provision of bus services.
- **Service Planning Guidelines:** These Guidelines are a schedule to the Metropolitan Bus System Contract and outline the planning process required under the Contract.
- **Urban Transport Statement November 2006:** The NSW Government's Urban Transport Statement commits to:
 - speed up the provision of bus priority on strategic bus corridors
 - planning of future bus priority corridors
 - commuter car parking at suburban rail stations
 - improved integration of bus and rail
 - supporting transport agencies in their planning, particularly for emerging technologies in rail, road and bus services.
- **Metropolitan Strategy 2005:** this proposes to create a City of Cities – with Parramatta, Liverpool, Penrith as regional CBDs. An aim of the strategy is to ensure that residents do not have to travel more than an hour a day to get to work.

Q.4 How are State Government programs and agencies supporting the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? Are there ways they could offer more support? Are there other programs or initiatives that are, or could, support the provision of bus services? What can stakeholders do to support that happening? Should other targets be set?

2.3.4 Local government

Local Government plays a critical role in facilitating the smooth operation of bus services.

A Department of Transport publication 'A Better Way to Go' (1990) suggested there were opportunities for local government to monitor the performance of local bus services, use existing community consultation mechanisms to seek feedback from the community on bus services and to liaise with bus operators on bus routes and frequencies.

The document suggested Councils and local public transport operators should consult with each other on:

- traffic management measures such as speed humps, etc
- planning and altering bus routes
- roadworks
- the provision of bus bays, bus shelters, bus stops and taxi ranks
- the provision of interchange facilities
- long-term forward planning
- The development of new release areas, to ensure that road design and community facilities cater for buses and that bus services are provided right from the early stages of these developments.
- Other developments, such as shopping, employment or community centres, which might affect public transport opportunities and demand. Demographic trends which may alter public transport demand patterns.
- Examples of traffic management measures include:
 - Roundabouts
 - Road closures: dead ends, cul de sacs and malls
 - Traffic signals
 - Speed humps
 - Tree planting on road shoulders and median strips
 - Footpath design
 - One-way road systems
 - Bypass roads.

Local Traffic Committees

The RTA mandates that each Council have a Local Traffic Committee to deal with traffic matters delegated by the RTA to Council and has prepared guidelines that sets out the minimum membership of this Committee¹⁵. Whilst the Local Traffic Committee votes, its decisions are not binding, this is left to the Full Council.

Voting members of the committee are:

- Council representative (either Councillor or Council Officer)
- One NSW Police representative
- Local MP or representative
- RTA representative

Council may invite non-voting participants onto the Committee including:

- Road Safety Officer
- Transport Workers Union representative
- Bus operator
- Chamber of Commerce representative
- Ambulance Service representative
- Fire Brigade representative

The RTA advises that the public should be permitted to address the meeting but 'under no circumstances should residents or other non-member stakeholders remain at the meeting whilst the proposal is debated and a vote taken'¹⁶. Local Governments have taken issue with this recommendation and are campaigning to have it removed¹⁷.

Q.5 How is local government in Western Sydney currently supporting the provision of bus services? Is there more that could be done? What do we need to do to make this happen?

3. Metropolitan Bus Contracts

Metropolitan Bus Contracts between the Ministry of Transport and bus operators govern the provision of bus services in Western Sydney.

Text in italics sets out the contractual requirements contained in the clause. Some clauses are included for information purposes but are not commented on.

Copies of a generic version of the contracts are available from the Ministry of Transport's website at:
www.transport.nsw.gov.au/busreform/metro-contract-downloads.html

3.1 Performance of bus services

- *Clause 4 of the Metropolitan Bus Contracts sets out that:*
- *contract terms are for seven years*
- *other buses can operate in the contract region*
- **Neighbouring bus services:** *the Operator must allow neighbouring bus service operators to:*
 - *operate services in or through the contract region, gain access to necessary facilities (including depots)*
 - *share layover facilities and infrastructure such as stops*
 - *provide a single timetable for that corridor*
 - *undertake a co-ordinated approach to sharing passenger information provision*
 - *offer single tickets along the line*
 - *co-ordinate the provision of Contract Service Levels for that corridor.*
- **Seamless network:** *all parties aim to provide a high standard network of Bus Services to deliver a seamless service across metropolitan Sydney. They will:*
 - *satisfy demand for passenger bus transport*
 - *integrate fares and tickets*
 - *integrate services within contract regions as well as along Strategic Transport Corridors*

- *incrementally upgrade the infrastructure and Bus Service along the Strategic Transport Corridors*
- *offer a full integration of passenger information*
- **Public works:** *the operator must co-operate with the Director General in relation to works undertaken in the contract region.*

3.1.1 Public works

There are many works that need to be constructed that are outside of the power of the bus operator to implement. However, they are vital for the smooth operation of services and to attract more passengers.

Bus priority

Giving buses priority over private vehicles is critical to enable bus operators to deliver a fast service that competes with the car.

The NSW Government has committed \$335 million to improving bus priority on Strategic Bus Corridors. Both infrastructure and technological solutions will be used to improve the average bus speed on strategic corridors¹⁸.

Whilst it is important that buses be given priority on strategic corridors that handle high volume of passengers, it is important that local chokepoints be removed too.

And whilst giving buses priority is vital, unless measures such as clearways are enforced, their impact is minimal.

Q.6 How are we going with providing bus priority? Are there other initiatives we could take to give buses priority on our roads?

Shelters, seats, timetables, car and bike parking

Bus shelters, bus seats, timetables and car and bicycle parking are part of the works that need to be undertaken to improve services.

A survey of *non-bus* users found that better information and improved amenities was most important to them¹⁹.

The installation of bus amenities is largely the responsibility of Local Councils, though RailCorp and shopping centres play a role too at interchanges.

These amenities are often:

widely perceived as ‘frills’ ... something that can simply be added to a vehicle or transit stop after the fact.

Compared to the recent interest in rethinking vehicle design, little effort has been made to improve the ‘passenger friendliness’ of bus waiting environment amenities, such as shelters.

In fact, due to cost, quantity, and the maintenance required, most agencies either do not provide shelters or use standard, catalogue items. Some communities, however, have found it possible to customize even small shelters, making them more welcoming and visible at the same time²⁰.

Local government is struggling to keep up with the community’s infrastructure needs²¹ and there is a varying degree of acceptance of responsibility amongst Councils for the provision of public transport infrastructure.

Prior to the 2007 Federal election, the Australian Local Government Association called for the establishment of a *Local Community Infrastructure Renewals Fund*²² to provide another \$250 million a year to local government to address the backlog in infrastructure provision. With the announcement of the Building Australia Fund Local Councils have an opportunity to advocate that some of this be used towards improving public transport infrastructure.

Q.7 How well are stakeholders providing bus amenities in Western Sydney? Can we do more? How would we fund more infrastructure?

Community involvement in public transport infrastructure

The community can be encouraged to support public transport infrastructure.

Good practice examples

Residents of Savannah, Georgia, have adopted 100 bus stops since 1992 and are committed to keeping the stops clean and graffiti-free. Many stops have been elaborately landscaped; one stop was even adopted and presented as a surprise gift to a family member.

The Los Angeles Neighbourhood Initiative is a community-based economic redevelopment effort centred on turning individual bus stops into places constructed and maintained by the community.

In Portland, Oregon, an elderly woman who personally cleans the bus information sign in front of her house says she and other volunteers would do more if they were asked!²³

Q.8 How is the community currently supporting bus infrastructure in Western Sydney? Can we do more?

Car parking

Transport planners are now talking about the need for a 'new paradigm of thinking'²⁴ about car parking. Whereas previously planning mantra was that abundant, 'free' car parking (though the cost is borne indirectly through rates and increased rents) was a vital necessity, modern thinking recognises the financial and environmental burdens and diminishment of urban amenity that car parks impose, along with encouraging driving.

A variety of parking management alternatives are now being deployed, including parking pricing, remote park and ride, improving public transport information provision, improve cycling and walking facilities, maximum rather than minimum parking requirements.

Parking is a controversial issue in Western Sydney, with residents and businesses largely desirous of parking at the front door of every facility, and many with responsibility for providing parking going to great lengths to provide it. RailCorp has a program of building car parks next to its stations to ensure their rail customers get easy access to trains. Does this practice undermine the viability of bus routes?

Q.9 Do our current car parking strategies undermine the viability of our bus services? Are there any changes to these strategies that are worthy of consideration?

3.2 Service levels and planning

Clause 5 sets out the service levels required of bus services:

- **Contract Service Plan:** The operator must have an approved contract service plan at all times that:
 - sets out service kilometres, service hours, service trips, hours of operation, frequency of service, first and last trip for in-bound and outbound services and maximum journey time
 - includes a map of the bus routes
 - identifies peak periods for general passenger services
- **Scheduled stops:** the Operator must ensure that each trip stops at each Stop at which it is scheduled to stop if passengers signal intention to board or alight.
- **Additional services:** the operator can operate services in addition to those that satisfy the contract service levels.
- **Proximity to services:** for each contract in metropolitan Sydney:
 - 90% of households should be within 400 metres (as the crow flies) of a rail line and/or a Regional or District bus route during peak, interpeak and daytimes.
 - 90% of households should be within 800m (as the crow flies) of a rail line and/or a Regional or District bus route at other times.
 - Local services should be considered for households outside the 400/800 metre bus route criteria.
- **Connections:** for any trip with a headway of more than 15 minutes which connect with other Trips, the max waiting time is 10 minutes.
- **Annual review:** the Operator must conduct an annual review of its contract service plan which must consider:
 - proposals to overcome any inefficiencies and increasing patronage whilst maintaining appropriate levels of access for all passengers
 - cost effectiveness of existing routes
 - trends or changes in the demographics, land uses and infrastructure that impact on bus operations
 - any other issue that the DG requests the operator to address
- **Regional Planning Forum:** a Regional Planning Forum is to be convened to consider the contract service plan. As well, the Service Planning Guidelines set out that the Operator is responsible for designing a consultation strategy which includes the public exhibition of the Region's proposed Annual Service Plan and Integrated Network Plan²⁵.

- *Community Kilometres: the Director-General may request the bus operator provide up to 20,000 kilometres outside of regular routes to community organisations.*

3.2.1 Contract Service Plan

Frequency of service

The frequency of services is an important factor in determining whether people use buses as it both reduces waiting times, increases confidence that a bus will be along soon and enables people to transfer to other services easily.

The NSW Independent Safety and Reliability Regulator suggests that 'better service quality would be expected to increase customer satisfaction and grow demand'²⁶.

Table 2 compares bus services offered in Melbourne, Vancouver and Toronto. It shows how frequent services which operate for most (or all) of the day, are matched with high patronage.

City	Melbourne	Toronto	Vancouver
Suburb	Keysborough	North York	Surrey
Distance from City (km)	25	25	30
Population density (p/ha)	32	34	11
Bus route (no.)	815	36	321
Bus service (frequency/mins)			
Peak period	60	2½	15
Off-peak (daytime)	60	6	15
Off-peak (evening)	no service	7½	15
Last bus	6:30pm	24hrs	2:00am
Saturday morning	60	8	15
Saturday afternoon	no service	7	15
Sunday	no service	10	30
Fare to City (bus and train)	\$9.20	\$3.00	\$6.00
Daily patronage (weekday)	350	20,000	4,000

Table 2. Comparison of bus services in three cities²⁷

Bankstown has a density of 22 people per hectare whilst the Auburn LGA has a density of 18.87²⁸.

Good practice example

In the early 1990s, the Invicta bus company in outer-eastern Melbourne increased its frequency from 30 minutes to 15 minutes on weekdays and from hourly to 20 minutes on Saturdays and connected the services up with local trains. Patronage grew by 28%²⁹.

Q.10 How do the densities of Western Sydney compare with those of Vancouver? Is there scope for our services to match those of Vancouver's? Can our densities and landuse structure to change to better support public transport? How could we support this to happen?

3.2.2 Scheduled stops

Good practice example

In the UK 95 per cent of buses should depart from one minute early to five minutes late from scheduled timetables, frequent services should not have excess waiting time averaging more than 1¼ minutes, and 95 per cent of services should end their journey no more than five minutes late³⁰.

3.2.3 Proximity to services

The Ministry of Transport's Service Planning Guidelines state:

It is generally impossible to provide viable, attractive, fixed route bus services if attempting to apply the 400/800 metre rule to 100% of households. Interstate and international criteria for the application of the 400/800 metre rule are generally between 90% and 95% of a metropolitan area.

Q.11 What is the impact of the provision of 400m 'as the crow flies' on residents of Western Sydney? Are there ways to ameliorate adverse impacts?

3.2.4 Connections and integration with rail services

Transport experts Paul Mees and Felix Laube recommend that 'people should have less than five minutes to wait for a guaranteed connecting service'³¹.

Buses should try to meet trains as much as is possible and practical. Consideration could also be given to printing connecting train services information where practical.

3.2.5 Planning and Reviewing bus services

Consulting the community about route changes is welcome and will hopefully result in better bus routes that closely match travellers needs, a process that is refined over time as further consultation occurs. The Regional Planning Forums are a good start with involving stakeholders, though there has been some feeling that the value of these could be enhanced by earlier, and more frequent, involvement of stakeholders.

Q.12 Has the community consultation process been effective? How have you been involved in planning for bus services? Are there other ways stakeholders could support planning for bus services?

3.2.6 Community Kilometres

The contracts for the Sydney bus regions specify that the Director-General may request the bus operator provide up to 20,000 'Community Kilometres' outside of scheduled routes. Each contract area is equally allocated 20,000kms.

Q.13 What is the current status of Community Kilometres? How can we assist them to be funded and distributed equitably across Western Sydney?

Q.14 Is there a role for flexible transport or demand responsive transport? Are there ways community transport and the route bus system can interact to combat transport disadvantage

3.3 Performance Requirements

Clause 6 sets out the standards of performance that bus services must meet including;

- **Quality service:** *services must be provided in a competent, courteous, safe manner.*
- **Bus Loading Standards:** *Bus Loading Standards must be adhered to*
- **Accessibility:** *An Accessible Transport Action Plan must show how the operator will comply with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 and must be reviewed annually and operators must liaise with Road Authorities to ensure accessible bus stops*
- **Environmental Plan:** *must have an Environmental Plan.*

3.3.1 Accessibility

The *Disability Discrimination Act 2002(Cth)* timetable for compliance is:

	2007	2012	2017	2022
Information	100%			
Infrastructure*	25%	55%	90%	100%
Bus Stops	25%	55%	90%	100%
Bus services	25%	55%	80%	100%

* Vending machines, gateways, surfaces, handrails and grab rails must be 100% compliant after 10 years.

As of June 30 2007, 320 out of 1336 (24.9%) of private buses operating in metropolitan Sydney are wheelchair accessible³². By December 2007 it is expected that this figure will rise to 33% of private buses³³.

Q.15 How are bus services currently meeting their performance requirements? Can stakeholders play a role here?

3.4 Ticketing and Fares

Clause 7 requires Operators to offer single and multi-ride Tickets at a price determined by IPART and not offer any Ticket products without the consent of the Director-General.

Whilst single tickets now cost the same on both privately operated and government operated buses, government operated buses offer a range of discounted tickets which are not available on privately operated buses. In Western Sydney passengers are frequently forced to buy a new ticket when they use a different form of transport. It can make public transport costly and act as a disincentive to using public transport. Low income households are disproportionately affected by fare inequities.

The NSW Council of Social Services says:

Low income households have lower levels of disposable income and therefore have a reduced capacity to meet large price increases. The effects of any fare increase for public transport services must be adequately assessed to ensure that there are no adverse impacts for low income users.

...Public transport pricing policy in NSW must be shaped to enable it to take into account the capacity to pay for low income users. ...[There is a] pressing need for more data, not only on the characteristics of public transport users, but the likely impacts of fare increases for different income groups, in particular low income users³⁴.

Good practice example

Transport for London has introduced free fares for people under 18.

Good practice example

Melbourne's Sunday Saver enables travellers to travel by public transport all day for \$2.90 and is available at shops, youth hostels etc.

Q. 16 How can stakeholders support the complete alignment of private, STA and T-Way bus fares? How can stakeholders support the adoption of integrated ticketing?

3.5 Passenger Relations and Information Systems

Clause 8 requires Operators to prepare a Passenger Relations Plan that details the operator's:

- *procedures to handle enquiries*
- *plans for dealing with lost children and other emergencies*
- *customer relations strategy*
- *program for passenger training to facilitate the uptake of bus travel by the elderly, disabled or culturally and linguistically diverse members of the community*
- *marketing to the public*
- *customer research including patronage surveys, loading counts, origin and destination surveys, focus groups, community consultation*
- *arrangements to adhere to the New South Wales Transport Customer Commitment*
- **Complaints:** *the operator is required to:*
 - *have procedures to manage complaints*
 - *guarantee appropriate response times to complaints*
 - *report annually to the Director-General on the number and type of complaints received, number of days taken to resolve complaint, how complaints were resolved, any problems of a systematic nature arising from, or identified by, the complaints, and consequent actions taken by the Operator, any complaints made to the NSW Ombudsman or any other external body of which the Operator is aware, any other relevant information reasonably required by the Director-General.*
 - *develop a strategy to identify problems of a systemic nature revealed by the complaints*
- **Information:** *the operator must:*
 - *participate in the 131500 Transport Infoline*
 - *deliver information to passengers via systems and technologies... which may include electronic displays, on-board announcements, talking signs and kiosks at locations including buses, stops,*

interchanges, and other public places. The Director General must meet extra costs of installing extra technology.

- *negotiate sign installation with relevant authorities and residents*
- *maintain signs at stops or must liaise with other persons responsible for stop maintenance*
- *liaise with local authorities to manage damage to signage at stops*
- *display the destination on the front and side of the bus and the route number on the front, back and side.*
- *ensure that timetables are available by mail on request, free of charge, on the operators website and via 131500 transport Infoline services and from a reasonable number of outlets along each bus route*
- *ensure that printed timetables are available at appropriate stops*
- *on request provide information about bus services accessibility*

3.5.1 Complaints handling

Currently, Sydney Buses uses 131 500 for complaints registration and handling, while private sector operators are continuing to use their own systems as well as 131 500. This means that complaints about private bus services are not yet completely transparent to the Ministry, including measures such as response times. A common system is currently being developed and all operators will be required to use it.

Good practice example

London TravelWatch, a statutory consumer body responsible for representing the interests of the users of London's various transport modes has recently been established. Its roles include:

- investigating suggestions and complaints from users who are dissatisfied with the response received from the service provider
- conducting independent research and produce publications on issues affecting transport users
- maintaining a regular dialogue with operators³⁵.

Q. 17 How are Passenger Relations currently managed? Are there ways stakeholders can strengthen passenger's relations with bus services in Western Sydney?

3.5.2 Information provision

Every bus stop requires both timetable and route^{36,37,38,39}. Ownership issues, especially as they relate to liability and maintenance of timetable cases and signposts, appear to be an issue. It appears local government, industry and the Ministry of Transport are each unwilling to assume responsibility for the totality of the public transport experience and, in some cases, uncertain as to whose job it really is.

Good practice example

In the UK, some bus authorities or operators report on the current state of public transport infrastructure provision⁴⁰.

Percentage of bus stops in the county with:

Shelters	23%
Timetable cases	31%
Poles	48%
Flags (bus stop signs)	60%
Street lighting within 20m	81%

Western Sydney has a diverse population, many of whom have languages other than English as a their first language. Informal consultations by WSCF has found that accessing information about public transport is a barrier in getting around on public transport, particularly on first arrival. This can result in recent arrivals, who are often refugees, being forced to use taxis to get around because they do not know how to catch public transport, creating a significant financial burden.

Good practice example

There are 54 languages spoken in Greater Manchester. Recent consultation with black and minority ethnic groups revealed that many experienced difficulties when trying to access information about public transport. To address this need... all frontline staff have access to the Language Line interpreting service. Language Line enables immediate, over-the-phone access to interpreters in over 120 languages⁴¹.

Q.18 How can stakeholders support improved public transport information provision?

3.6 Bus fleets

Clause 18 sets out the standards expected of buses including:

- *the average age of [all] contract buses[in the contracted fleet] must not exceed 12 years*
- *and the maximum age of each contract bus must not exceed 25 years*
- *each contract bus must be clean and tidy at the commencement of operation each day and not used if it becomes so unclean that its uncomfortable to the passengers*
- *The Director General may grant exemption from this if it doesn't breach any safety requirements or significantly adversely affect the comfort of the passengers.*

3.6.1 Standards of contract buses

That the Metropolitan Bus Contract permits buses to be up to 25 years old demonstrates that NSW lags behind other countries with our age of buses. It also diminishes the image of the bus service, intimating that buses are for second class citizens. The 'image of bus services can be significantly enhanced if the vehicles are modern and clean'⁴².

UK guidance says that:

The main reason for buying a new bus is to meet changing, and rising, expectations in the market place. ...the business case for earlier replacement of vehicles [brings] together three key elements:

- reduced maintenance costs
- improved productivity arising from the lower and more regular journey times as a result of effective bus priorities
- increased revenue from the more attractive service package.

Ridership is also increased by accessible buses allowing easier use by those with wheelchairs [prams, and shopping trolleys]. In recent years new buses have been also more comfortable for the ordinary passenger, offering more

personal space, better heating and more comfortable seating than the buses they replace⁴³.

Good practice example

The UK has a target to 'reduce the average age of the bus fleet to eight years and to ensure that half of all full-sized buses are accessible to wheelchair users by 2010. By 2003-04 the average age of the bus and coach fleet in Great Britain was 7.9 years compared with 8.5 in 2000'⁴⁴.

Good practice example

The American Public Transit Association notes that 'since 1997 the average age of buses has fallen 20% (from 8.7 years to 6.9 years)⁴⁵ and in Washington DC the bus company MetroBus has a goal of buses not being over five years old⁴⁶.

Emission standards

Buses in Australia lag at least five years behind Europe in terms of their air pollution emissions (though in Western Sydney 25 year old buses will be permitted even by 2012). In Australia buses need only meet Euro 3 standards whilst in Europe buses have been at stricter Euro 4 standards since 2004 and are scheduled to meet Euro 5 in 2008⁴⁷.

About 300,000 children ride buses every day. Their health, as well as the health of the drivers, is at risk from old diesel buses⁴⁸. A US study found that children travelling in older diesel buses can be exposed to pollutants 5-15 times higher than background levels⁴⁹, associated with worsening asthma, bronchitis, and pneumonia and retarded lung development as well as increased hospital admissions and emergency room visits for respiratory illnesses⁵⁰.

Total Environment Centre reports that one Euro 3 diesel bus is estimated to create \$24,000 per year in health costs from particulate pollution alone, whilst costs from ozone would cost \$7,222⁵¹ due to 'premature death, quality of life impacts, health care costs and lost productivity'⁵².

The RTA's Clean Fleet Program 'is an audited maintenance program, designed to improve air quality by reducing diesel vehicle emissions'⁵³. A number of bus companies are participating.

A case can be made for an accelerated program of replacing old buses in NSW. In a Commitment to WSROC before the last State election, the ALP made a promise to clean up 1,332 older diesel buses in the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Region⁵⁴.

The *NSW State Plan* says it will purchase buy 1000 new buses in the next 7 years.

Good practice example

In the United States, the US EPA is engaged in the Clean School Bus USA program. This program is implementing bus replacement, an engine retrofit and clean fuels program and anti-idling strategies to reduce children's exposure to air pollution from diesel school buses.

Q.19 How are we doing in bringing our buses to match world's best practice? How can we ensure they do?

3.7 Staffing

Clause 17 requires all staff who work with customers must receive annual training on matters including requirements of passengers with disabilities or from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the management of confrontation, difficult passengers and personal safety and occupational health and safety issues.

Bus drivers have can face difficult, and even dangerous, situations when passengers become angry, or when rocks are thrown at buses. Training will assist drivers to manage these safety issues. However, Western Sydney is facing a shortage of drivers, which could lead to companies struggling to fill rosters.

Q.20 What are worker's experiences of driving a bus? What support do workers need to continue to offer their vital service to the community? What can be done to increase driver recruitment?

3.8 Contract variations

Clause 18 allows the Director General to vary the contract at any time.

3.9 Business planning, records and reporting

Clause 20 requires the Operator and Associated Operator to:

- *provide a Half Year Preliminary Report or Full Year Preliminary Report including a progress against Key Performance Indicators*
- *report every 6 months in local newspapers, on Contract Buses, and on the web the results of any customer surveys and from 1 January 2007, its operational performance.*

At present, only the State Transit Authority publishes performance indicators (see Table 2 below). The Ministry of Transport is working with operators to prepare new performance reports. ITSRR has proposed a set of performance measures (Table 3, below) that it considers will assist the community to determine whether systems are in place to enable bus services to performing effectively.

Litman⁵⁵ cautions that indicators may not accurately measure the full social, environmental or economic impacts of transport. They may be too narrow in scope, fail to indicate the real goal aimed for, or not consider 'cradle to grave' impacts. He draws attention to the need for indicators that are: comprehensive, good quality, comparable, easy to understand, accessible, transparent, cost effective and indicative of net effects.

Q.21 What performance measures and indicators are needed to communicate to the community that the appropriate level of service is being delivered? How should these be reported to the community?

Sydney Buses					
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Total revenue ('000)	\$408,017	\$439,946	\$440,384	\$454,588	\$477,167
Total expenses ('000)	\$419,085	\$416,254	\$407,757	\$449,880	\$418,560
Patronage ('000)	187,307	187,288	187,223	186,486	186,363
Kilometres ('000)	78,852	77,426	78,593	78,993	79,117
Staff	3,700	3,642	3,775	3,854	3,911
Total revenue per passenger	\$2.18	\$2.35	\$2.35	\$2.44	\$2.56
Total revenue per Km	\$5.17	\$5.68	\$5.60	\$5.75	\$6.03
Passengers per vehicle Km	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4
Cost per passenger	\$2.24	\$2.22	\$2.18	\$2.41	\$2.25
Cost per vehicle Km	\$5.31	\$5.38	\$5.19	\$5.70	\$5.29
Passengers per employee	50,624	51,424	49,595	48,393	47,651
Vehicle Km per employee	21,311	21,259	20,819	20,498	20,229
Changeovers per 100,000 Kms					
Mechanical	17.60	16.15	16.13	15.26	13.87
Traffic	4.64	4.41	4.53	3.98	3.58
Average bus vehicle age	11.7	12.2	13.0	12.8	12.7
Bus service reliability (on time)	96%	96%	96%	95%	95%
Fleet size buses	1,756	1,704	1,729	1,745	1,733
Western Sydney Buses					
Total revenue ('000)		\$745	\$3,135	\$3,740	\$4,161
Total expenses ('000)		\$3,078	\$6,552	\$6,420	\$5,974
Patronage ('000)		284	1,299	1,687	2,015
Kilometres ('000)		613	1,955	1,733	1,665
Staff		47	47	48	49
Total revenue per passenger		\$2.62	\$2.41	\$2.22	\$2.07
Total revenue per Km		\$1.22	\$1.60	\$2.16	\$2.50
Passengers per vehicle Km		0.5	0.7	1.0	1.2
Cost per passenger		\$10.84	\$5.04	\$3.81	\$2.96
Cost per vehicle Km		\$5.02	\$3.35	\$3.71	\$3.59
Passengers per employee		6,043	27,638	35,146	41,122
Vehicle Km per employee		13,043	41,596	36,098	33,980
Changeovers per 100,000 Kms					
mechanical			8.18	11.72	9.37
Traffic			6.14	5.37	2.22
Average bus vehicle age		0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Fleet size – buses		17	17	17	17

Table 3. STA Performance Indicators

Service Design/Performance Measures

Proposed element of service quality	Potential benefit for passengers	How might this benefit be measured	Current results
1. Initiatives for service quality			
1a: Air-conditioning.	Greater comfort.	Air-conditioned buses: number or % of fleet.	102 new STA buses
1b: Low floor buses.	Faster entry to buses resulting in faster trips and greater punctuality.	Low-floor buses: number or % of fleet. Changes to timetable or on-time running.	
1c: High capacity buses.	Reduced crowding and seating avail on the bus	Articulated buses: no or % of fleet. Crowding measures.	80 new STA articulated buses
1d: Average bus age.	Greater comfort.	Average fleet age	
1d: Increased maintenance	Reduced mechanical breakdowns Improved cleanliness.	Defect rates Bus changeover rates. Cleanliness inspections, specific passenger complaints	14.9249
1e: Bus priority measures.	Faster trips. Improved punctuality.	Installation of devices.. Changed timetable.	NA Available for STA
1f: PTIPS.	A bus priority measure	As for 1e.	NA
1g: Cashless fares.	Faster entry to buses, faster trips and greater punctuality.	Changes to timetable or on-time running.	NA
1h: Smart Card	A type of cashless fare	As above	NA
1i: Availability of Pensioner Excursion Ticket in metro region	May reduce the number of fare transactions with results similar to cashless fare	As above.	Availability
1j: Integrated Transport Information Service (funding for private operators to participate).	Convenience – up to date and accurate travel information available from single source	Change in the number of bus operations covered in ITIS. Accuracy of info compared with published timetable	NA
1k: Env and passenger relations plans.	Changed service routes, frequency, timetable	Increase in patronage	NA
2. Measurement of current service quality			
2a. On time running.	Punctuality.	For STA, measured at the terminus	95.6%
2b. New technologies and management systems for measuring OPR	Improved accuracy of measured performance	Installation of devices	NA
2c: Passenger safety incidents.	Safe travel	Number of incidents reported	STA: 1.91 incidents/ million passengers, target of 2.00.
2d: Passenger security incidents below target.	Safe personal travel	Number of incidents reported	STA: 0.60 incidents / million pass'gers, target <0.50.
3. Price and cost attributes			
3a: Lower fares on private buses	Cheaper fare		
3b. Avail Pensioner Excursion Ticket in metro region.	Cheaper fare		
3c. Driver Wage increase	Increased cost.		
3d. TCard in SSTS	N/A		

Table 4: Treatment of aspects of service quality of Bus Reform from ITSRR

3.10 Payments

Clause 21 provides that the Director-General and the Operator agree to make payments in accordance with Schedule 4.

Previously bus companies received funding for carrying school children and used this money to cross subsidise other services where fares did not entirely cover the cost of providing the service. Now the Government is paying the bus operators for each kilometre of service that is provided. The Government does not intend that the number of kilometres provided increases dramatically, rather that services are better co-ordinated.

The bus system is sometimes criticised for requiring a subsidy⁵⁶. However, the external benefits from public transport are potentially substantial⁵⁷ as people other than the bus users benefit from having good bus services. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal asserts that:

there are very good reasons for subsidising public transport in general. In particular, external benefits are enjoyed by the community overall, and by road users in particular, from the operation of public transport.

There is considerable evidence that private cars impose substantial externality costs on the community in the form of environmental pollution, congestion and other such impacts. Therefore, by substituting for private cars, public transport creates an externality benefit associated with the avoidance of externality costs through having fewer trips made by private cars. In addition, there are general community benefits from having a public transport system which contributes to the mobility of individuals, and which helps meet the community's urban planning strategies.

Those who benefit from improved bus services include:

- **The community and the welfare system:** Social inclusion is increased as people easily travel to workplaces, to friends and family or recreational opportunities.
- **The education system:** students are able to attend class.
- **The health system:** there are less car crashes and asthma attacks, people who need medical services can easily travel to them, even if they don't have a car and people are healthier due to walking to public transport services and access to all community facilities.

- **Farmers:** there is less pollution. It's been estimated that 10% of Sydney's agriculture is damaged by ozone caused by cars.
- **Retailers:** people can get to the shops, and there is less need for ugly car parks to reduce the shopping amenity.
- **The property industry:** there is less need to dedicate vast areas of land to car parks which can instead be used more productively.

Q.22 What level of subsidy is appropriate to ensure bus services meet community needs in Western Sydney?

3.11 Intellectual property, marks and advertising

Clause 29 sets out that buses may be required to have the same livery, that they may be compensated for complying with this direction and that advertising on Contract Buses must comply with all applicable Laws and codes and must not obscure the route number and destination details on a Contract Bus

4. Other matters

Whilst we have concentrated on matters that 'fall out of' the Metropolitan Bus Contracts, other matters can also impact on the provision of bus services.

Q.23 What other matters do you think the Connecting with Buses Project needs to consider in order to better support the provision of bus services in Western Sydney? What other initiatives can we undertake to support bus services that are not encompassed by the Contracts?

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