



PUBLIC

Minister for Transport; Disability Services

Hon. Simon O'Brien MLC

Our reference: 29-09947

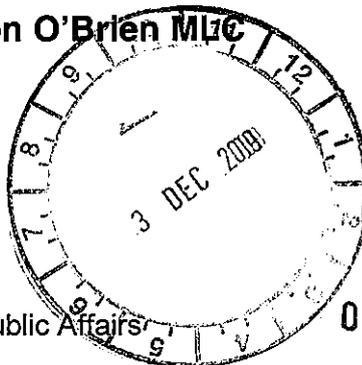
Hon Brian Ellis MLC

Chairman

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Parliament House

Perth WA 6000



01 DEC 2009

Dear Mr Ellis

Thank you for your letter regarding a petition that has been referred to the Committee requesting an additional route 344 bus service or the retiming of an existing trip to arrive at Ballajura Community Centre at 9:00 am.

The current Transperth timetable for Route 344 on weekdays has trips from Morley Bus Station that pass the Ballajura Community Centre at approximately 8:22 am and 8:48 am. From the other direction the timetable has a trip originating from Cromwell Road that passes the Community Centre at approximately 8.44 am with the next trip from Warwick Station passing at approximately 9:45 am.

Public transport in Perth and in all western cities requires a substantial operating subsidy, with the fare box only covering around 25% of total costs. There are good reasons to subsidise public transport such as the need to double or triple the size of key roads and freeways to cope with key travel periods if public transport did not exist, and noting public transport reduces pollutant emissions, reduces costs from road accident trauma, reduces health costs from air pollutant related conditions and reduces the cost to business of traffic congestion. Nevertheless, even noting these positive impacts of public transport, the amount of subsidy that can be afforded is finite and must fit among Governments' many responsibilities.

Noting the points above, the provision of public transport services and the planning of bus routes invariably involve making informed decisions on the best way to use taxpayers' money. Given that Transperth's funding is finite, it must plan and operate its services in a way that provides the greatest benefit to the community as a whole. Therefore it is not always possible for Transperth to provide the frequency of service or specific trip times on a particular route desired by individuals or groups in the community. When making changes to existing services, Transperth evaluates the impact the change would have on the existing passengers already using the service.

As a result of your request, Transperth surveyed passengers who presently use the 8:30 am route 344 service from Cromwell Road. This survey took place on Thursday 29 October 2009. While admittedly some passengers were not opposed to the requested change, 15 passengers were opposed to any change citing the trip was appropriate to their needs, or would result in them missing onward connections at Morley Bus Station. It is important to understand that any change to the existing service not only affects passengers on the trip change, but has a flow on effect to any trip the bus is rostered to complete following the 344 service and results in the service no longer connecting with buses it is scheduled to meet at Morley Bus Station.

Based on the passenger survey and the impact to other services, the Public Transport Authority (PTA) has advised that it does not support delaying the departure of the 8:30am trip commencing at Cromwell Road.

Thank you again for raising the concerns of your constituents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. O'Brien', written in a cursive style.

Simon O'Brien MLC
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT