

## Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Public Transport

We are happy to give our input as follows:

The Public Transport is not just a matter of a few carriages. It is a whole system. In this respect TransPerth is still far, far away from a real public transport system appropriate for a developed country. Two years ago a spokesman of TransPerth wrote a long letter in the local newspapers, praising TransPerth (and himself) to be the best public transport system in Australia and one of the best in the world. This spokesperson has probably never been to Europe, certainly not to Switzerland. We come originally from Switzerland where we never had the need to own a car for 45 years. Here in Perth we cannot cope without...

We would like to list the following "pylons" of a real public transport system with some advises how to improve it:

### Reliability

- Public transport must be reliable from Monday to Sunday throughout the whole year. It is unacceptable that a line is cut off for a weekend because of maintenance. If a bolt has to be tightened or some sleepers have to be replaced one of the two tracks must always be kept open. It is only a matter of planning and management in the first place (when railway is built) that this is possible. We lived in Switzerland near a railway line with more than a thousand (!) trains passing EVERY day even if the tracks needed some maintenance. Why should an uninterrupted operation not be possible here in Perth with only a small number of trains circulating?
- When a line is cut off there is (sometimes) a note at the stations telling the customers that they should take instead bus so-and-so at the corner of that and this road. Perth covers more than 5'000 km<sup>2</sup>. If you do not live in the area you have no idea where this bus stop is and you really do not carry the whole street directory of Perth with you all the time.
- On the covering bus (as on every bus) it is not allowed to bring your bicycle. Whole families are stranded on there Sunday's ride because the train ceased operation that weekend.
- At the train stations there is a displayed info about the next train's departure. As this is only a copy of the printed timetable it happens that the minutes on the display come down to zero and start again with let's say 15. But no train shows up. It is cancelled without notice and the passengers wait another 15 minutes.
- Same situation at some bus stops (if there is a timetable displayed). The expected bus is not late, it does not arrive at all!

### Ticket System

- Frequent passengers should get a discount. Owning a SmartRider Card does not yet mean that one is a regular. Every day users of the public transport should be rewarded.
- Frequent users should have the option to get a ticket valid for an unlimited number of rides within a specified time period so that they do not have to tag on / tag off every time they catch the train. In Switzerland you get ticket passes for a month or a whole year with an appropriate discount.
- Passengers are not treated as valued customers but as potential evaders. If somebody forgets to tag off (which would not be necessary for many passengers if there is a period ticket as described above) they are charged or rather fined with the maximal fee. Please note that Perth's ticket system runs in Singapore which is a dictatorship with all impacts, even technical ones.

### Timetables

- The railway lines are counted and named from the Perth City Centre to the outskirts with the impact that you have to study two timetables (one for each line). In Switzerland there are combined timetables which show you all connections at a single sight. For Cities like Zurich you get a little booklet which contains all connections at one sight. The same exists for whole Switzerland containing hundreds (!) of lines.
- All departure times at a specific station should be unchanged during the day except for maybe a doubling or even tripling of the frequency during the rush hour. For example the train ALWAYS (i.e. EVERY day) departs at the same minutes after the hour. This makes the timetable much simpler and the mentioned booklet possible.

- The online timetables are faulty. For example if you want to ride from Meltham to Kelmscott you get the advise to change trains at Mclver although Claisebrook would be the better option. As a consequence the average passenger will miss the connecting train as they have to spend more time in the train to get to Mclver and than have to walk first a 100m along the lines than cross the lines (mostly closed as the connecting train is already closing in from Perth) and finally when the crossing is cleared again speed another 100m along the lines. You only make it as a sprinter and not an average, let alone a disabled person.
- If you go to live in another suburb you first have to find out what buses (and from where & where to) exist there. An overall map with all trains and buses is urgently needed.
- In Switzerland there is at EVERY bus and tramway stop and at EVERY train station a timetable (and an overall map as well) on display specifically made for this stop.

### Infrastructure

- People like some comfort. If they should be lured on catching the train it is unbearable that many of the carriages have a very limited number of seats. Standing and at rush hours jammed like crayfishes in a cage from Joondalup to Perth is not very tempting with the consequence that the private car is preferred.
- At many stations there is only one way in/out with the impact that if the train composition is longer the passengers have to walk quite a bit as all of them have to go through the narrow (and tagging off means an additional delay). More accesses to the stations have to be built.
- The new underground train station was praised by TransPerth as one of the world's best. There are thousands of similar ones in different countries. The location is a good example for a wrongly planned station. If you change trains from Mandurah to Midland you have to undertake a 250m walk: first up to the main station, than all along the lines to get access to the only overpass and than down to the platform. The half finished bridge on the west side of the main station should give access to EVERY platform to avoid this unacceptable, time consuming detour (a very cheap solution to an annoying situation).
- If the number of passengers rise (which is the goal) there are three options for the infrastructure. It is very costly to change things if the planning and realisation went into a dead end:
  - Higher frequency of the operating trains (limited by the two single tracks)
  - Longer trains (no way if there is one exit only)
  - Double storey carriages (even the new Mandurah line missed out on this option as the power lines and maybe even the tunnels are built too low)
- Many more train lines have to be built if we do not want to get an unmanageable (car) traffic in the near future. In the Metropolitan Area Zurich (about half the size of the Metropolitan Area Perth) there is a network of 22 lines (if counted like in Perth there are even 44 lines!!!) and this apart from hundreds of bus and tramway lines.
- Not all trains should concentrate in the centre of Perth. Ring lines, connecting outer suburbs without the need to ride first into the Perth centre are to be built (like the existing bus lines 98 & 99 – which get stuck in the traffic jam).
- There is the urgent need for a public transport (bus or even better train) from and to the domestic and international airport. The shuttle bus from the airport is a rip-off concentrating on guests from overseas who do not realize that a taxi for two people is not dearer than the shuttle bus.

### Interconnections

- The illogical detours as detailed above have to be avoided and the needed measures taken to improve the situation/infrastructure.
- Buses are generally very good connected to the train stations but they get stuck in the daily traffic jams. Specific bus lanes (like in some parts of the freeway and for example in Inglewood) are highly recommended even if this means a loss of a traffic lane for the private cars.

### Summary

Perth and WA are far from having a suitable public transport system. If we want to miss out on a collapse of the whole system (public and private sector) there is an urgent need to act and to invest in our future even if the times are rough at the moment with the world wide financial crisis. To get an idea what a real public transport system is we strongly recommend that planners and stakeholders should seek advice abroad (why not Switzerland?).