

To the Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Please accept this response as an Elected Member from the City of Melville and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to comment on Commonwealth and State funding for public transport infrastructure. My views are my own and do not represent those of the City of Melville or the MRRG.

I currently chair the City's Roadwise and Travelsmart Advisory Committee, a group comprising local residents, bicycle user groups, motorcycle user groups, and staff from the City of Melville, WA police, WALGA: very much focused on transport of all types within and through the City.

I also represent the South West Group of Council's (Melville, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Cockburn, Kwinana and Rockingham on the Main Roads Department (WA) Metropolitan Regional Roads Group (MRRG): a body giving advice for the prioritisation of funding to Main Roads for local and regional road infrastructure.

This body was set up in the mid 1990s with criteria designed to commit funding for improvement and rehabilitation projects in the local government areas within metropolitan Perth. In 2005 a review found that "improvement funding" consistently is allocated to projects that facilitate growth in outer suburbs of the metropolitan area, and this trend is continuing.

On investigation the overall objectives for transport and criteria used do not accommodate road improvements that facilitate public transport provision or accessibility in Perth. This matter has been the subject of debate within the group for the 4 years that I have been involved with it, a timeframe which I consider extraordinarily slow, although I acknowledge the worthy road improvement projects that have been allocated funding during this period.

The problem highlights differences in access and use of public transport in different zones within the metropolitan area. Local Governments with areas where it would be ideal to improve public transport infrastructure in the middle and inner metropolitan zones do not even undertake design or planning for these improvements or submit them because they know the criteria will not allow them to gain funding. These would include provision of bus lanes, for congestion reduction and reduced travel time etc. Thus it is a waste of their resources to undertake the expensive planning and modeling required, and improvements cannot be done.

Thus my suggestion to this inquiry is that strategically planned criteria and funding are in place to facilitate infrastructure improvements rather than eliminate opportunities for public transport provision. This would need to include funding from the Federal Government as the projects are usually outside the scope of most local government to consider.