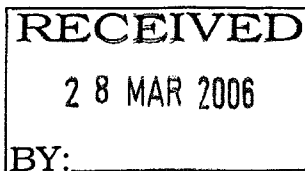


Office of the Chief Executive



Mr Ian Primrose
Chief Executive Officer
Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission
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CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608



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Dear Mr Primrose

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Review of ACTION Buses pricing for 2006-07 Issues Paper. My Department has had some involvement with transport related issues and has interacted with ACTION officers on issues mainly to do with the ACT Concessions Program. In this context, I would like to raise a number of broader issues regarding the provision of public transport to residents in the ACT that have come to my attention.

We have received complaints from both ACT and non-ACT residents in regard to access to both transport services and transport concessions in the ACT. These complaints have been from refugees and students who cannot access concessions provided by ACTION due to the eligibility criteria as well as residents who do not have ACTION services in their area.

We have been working to address these issues, however, provision of equal access to services for all ACT residents remains an area of concern. ACTION does not provide a bus service to ACT residents living in Oaks Estate, Pialligo, Harman, Southside Caravan Park Symonston, Hall, Williamsdale, Tharwa and the Canberra Airport. Residents who need to access public transport access other providers such as Deanes Buslines, Transborder and Country Link at a much higher cost than their ACT counterparts and are subsequently financially disadvantaged.

Of particular concern is the issue of public transport for ACT residents living in Oaks Estate. This Canberra suburb has approximately 350 residents of which 35% are ACT public housing tenants. Deanes Buslines is the only public transport provider in the area and for residents to get to Civic or Woden they pay a great deal more than their ACT counterparts living in other parts of Canberra and who have access to ACTION buses.

The Oaks Estate Progress Association and Tenants Group have unsuccessfully lobbied ACTION for many years to have bus services provided to their area. My Department is currently working with residents of Oaks Estate, Deanes Buslines and ACTION to address this situation. I am confident that this situation will be remedied in the near future.


My Department is also developing and implementing formal administrative arrangements with all concession providers to ensure transparency and accountability for the expenditure is maintained. To date, a total of 50 formal arrangements in the form of contracts or MOUs have been implemented covering all concessions providers, except with ACTION.

ACTION officers are considering a draft MOU and will provide further advice regarding its finalisation in the near future.

I would be grateful if you would take the issues raised above into consideration in reviewing ACTION Buses pricing for 2006-07.

In the meantime, should you wish to discuss these issues, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Nic Manikis, Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Community Development on phone 6205 0522.

Yours sincerely



Sandra Lambert
Chief Executive
24/3/06