

Passenger Relations Plan

Introduction

As part of its contract to provide bus services the State Transit Authority of New South Wales, trading as Sydney Buses, prepares a Passenger Relations Plan that explains how it intends to meet its obligations to provide information to the public its services. This is a summary of the plan for 2008-2009.

General

CUSTOMER RELATIONS STRATEGY

Objective

To deliver a positive customer experience of Sydney Buses services

Initiatives

State Transit has a full program to provide and improve information for customers. During 2008-2009 we have a range of initiatives planned, which are outlined below.

1. Providing quality customer information by:
 - Upgrading the State Transit website
 - Developing and launching campaigns to underpin the environmental and social benefits of Sydney Buses services
 - Rolling out new bus stop timetable signs
 - Developing and implementing phase one of a refreshed brand for Sydney Buses.
2. Developing Community and Corporate Partnerships by:
 - Entering sponsorship agreements with corporate partners to build reputation and brand
 - Enhancing partnerships with ticket resellers
 - Developing relationships with community organisations and charities
3. Passenger Education
 - Launch enhanced PrePay campaign
 - Launch campaign to lift awareness of services for people with disabilities
4. Building Customer Service Excellence by:
 - Doing more internal communications to staff to improve customer service outcomes
 - Updating State Transit's Guarantee of Service
5. Achieving Optimum Service Recovery by:
 - Improving methods of telling passengers of last minute service changes
 - Improving methods of handling complaints
6. Improving our understanding of what our customers want with market research into:
 - Customer expectations and opinions, including among commuters, pensioners, shoppers and tourists to underpin campaigns to encourage greater use of bus services.

The success of our initiatives are measured against the objectives set and improved customer satisfaction.

Customer Relations

All customer feedback is recorded and reported on in order to measure performance and analyse trends.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

State Transit's Passenger Relations Plan and activities are underpinned by a Customer Relations and Communications Division lead by a Director (SES Position) with staff appointed in areas of Customer and Community Relations, Passenger Information, Media and Corporate Relations, Employee Communications and Marketing.

In Contract Regions, Executive Management, Depot Operations Managers, and a Region Contract Administrator also support this plan.

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

1. Provision of Passenger Information

State Transit aims to provide clear, accurate and timely information to customers through a number of distribution channels.

Customer Information is supplied as:

- Itinerary and journey planning (131500 and 131500 website)
- State Transit's passenger information website (www.sydneybuses.info)
- Timetables and maps
- Transport Access Guides
- Brochures
- Bus stop signage
- Posters for on-bus information
- Bus destination signs
- Advertising
- Emergency response and special event signage

Bus Stop Signage

State Transit signs meet Best Practice Guidelines (version 1, November 2002). The colours and graphics used are being upgraded to match the new integrated transport guidelines.

During 2009, new plinth type bus stop signs in accord with the new guidelines and the signage requirements of the Commonwealth Disability Transport Standards are being installed along major corridors in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport. These are designed to provide more information to passengers about bus services.

Bus Destination Signs

State Transit has improved bus destination signs to provide more legible destination information, clearer route numbers and a consistent layout.

State Transit conforms to the requirements of Integrated Transport Information System (ITIS) and the allocation of bus route numbers across Sydney.

Timetables

State Transit acknowledges the request to have new and revised timetables available no later than the planned implementation date. Electronic versions of the timetables are also available on State Transit's website and through the Transport Infoline channels.

Marketing of Changed Bus Services

The main emphasis is on communicating timely, clear and accurate information on bus service changes (new, altered or withdrawn) to those people affected by any changes.

Major Event Transport Marketing

State Transit partners with the Ministry of Transport, RailCorp and Sydney Ferries Corporation on major event transport marketing.

State Transit Bus Advertising (Revenue Earning Contract)

State Transit manages the bus advertising contract and works with the contractor APN Outdoor to develop new advertising formats, handling complaints, developing artwork for bus designs and installing posters on board buses.

Tcard Marketing

The TAC is responsible for all aspects of the marketing and communications of the Tcard. However, the TAC has and will continue to require the assistance of State Transit for very specific communications to our staff and customers, which is provided.

School Student Dipping Campaign

State Transit has developed a strategy and ongoing campaign to encourage all school children to use their school passes appropriately and comply with the code of conduct.

Bus Operator Recruitment Campaign

State Transit has developed a recruitment campaign to assist in the recruitment of bus operators. The campaign has been successful in increasing the numbers of job applicants.

Revenue Protection Campaign

State Transit has developed material to assist the Revenue Protection Officers in their role of educating the public about tickets and fares to minimise fare evasion.

2. Participation in 131500 Transport Infoline

State Transit supports the Transport Infoline, the customer interface of the Integrated Transport Information System (ITIS). The Transport Infoline is a

multi-modal one stop passenger contact service provided through various communications channels including by telephone, internet, and web-enabled telephony.

3. Complaints & Enquiry Handling

State Transit customer feedback is managed through the consumer affairs software system known as Satisfy. The system allows cases to be logged into a central management database to support resolution of customer concerns.

4. Dealing with Emergencies and Lost People including children

In emergencies and instances of lost people, particularly the very elderly and children, the call centre assists in forwarding relevant urgent information to the operations Radio Room where established procedures are activated involving Police, the State Transit network of bus drivers and supervisors.

5. Customer Relations Strategy

The Strategy comprises a number of initiatives, which have been detailed above as part of the Passenger Relations Plan.

6. Programs for Passenger Training to Facilitate the Uptake of Bus Travel by the elderly, disabled or culturally and linguistically diverse

State Transit runs a number of programs to facilitate the up take of bus travel by the elderly, disabled or culturally and linguistically diverse. These include:

- Marketing to seniors, parents (with prams) and disabled groups
- Community language (NESB) communications.

7. Marketing the benefits of Bus Services

Marketing of the benefits of public transport leads to increased patronage and better utilisation of Sydney Buses assets. This marketing includes:

- Targeting groups of individuals with similar transport needs to sell the benefits of appropriate bus services to these groups.
- Distributing relevant and accurate information
- Targeting specific households within the route catchment area with relevant direct mail, particularly if there is a major change to a strategic route.

8. Ongoing Market Research

State Transit's market research includes:

- Community consultation
- Customer qualitative and quantitative surveys
- Analysis of feedback from drivers
- Informally researching the needs of the major patronage generators such as businesses, shopping centres, universities and hospitals
- Analysing customer feedback from the Your Say Line, Transport Data Centre and State Transit's Executive Information System.

9. Adherence to the NSW Transport Customer Commitment

State Transit is committed to the NSW Ministry of Transport's "Transport Customer Commitment Charter". Moreover, State Transit's Guarantee of Service is published each year in the Annual Report.