

Public transport services ‘not okay’ say children and young people in SA

Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly, says South Australia’s children and young people have told her they ‘don’t feel safe’ on our buses, trains and trams and are sometimes made to ‘feel unwelcome’. They fear they may be issued with a fine for a minor offence such as not carrying their student ID and would like a better standard of public transport service delivered to them overall.

Given how important public transport is in ensuring children and young people remain connected to school, sports and extra-curricular activities, the Commissioner felt their concerns warranted an examination of current public transport service delivery from their point of view, to see where improvements could be made.

The findings have come out in the *Public Transport – It’s Not Fine* report released by the Commissioner today. This report examines systemic issues identified by South Australian children and young people in relation to their experience of public transport services across metropolitan and regional centres.

The Commissioner makes six key recommendations to government. Their adoption would have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people who currently use public transport services.

The recommendations range from embedding national child safety and wellbeing principles into organisational leadership, governance, culture and training, to lowering the rate of fine that can be issued to a child or young person.

With the recent establishment of the South Australian Public Transport Association (SAPTA) this is an opportune time to review the practice of fines issued to children and young people travelling on SA public transport services. It is also an ideal time to re-evaluate how service providers can best meet their obligations in relation to operating child-friendly and child-safe organisations.

Quotes attributable to Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly:

Public transport is a subject that unites children and young people across both metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia. Its availability and affordability underpins children and young peoples' capacity and ability to engage with school, employment, sport, hobbies, interests and recreational activities. When transport is lacking, unreliable, unsafe, or unaffordable, it has a disproportionate impact on the lives of our children and young people. We can streamline practices that will send a strong message to our children and young people that we support their efforts to remain connected to school, sport and extra-curricular activities and that we trust them to utilise public transport as responsible young members of our community.

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For more information about the work of the Commissioner for Children and Young People and to access the *Public Transport – It's Not Fine* report go to www.ccyp.com.au