

# Submission to the Northern Adelaide Transport Study

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Commissioner  
Y for Children &  
Young People

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## The Northern Adelaide Transport Study

Department for Infrastructure and Transport

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My role as Commissioner for Children and Young People was established under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* to promote and advocate for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all children and young people living in South Australia, and to help bring about improvements to systems that impact on them. Since 2017, I have been actively engaging with the children and young people of SA to hear their thoughts in order to advocate on their behalf. One of the rights relevant to transport is that agencies should always do what is in the best interests of the child (Article 3), including keeping children safe.

In my conversations and interactions with thousands of children and young people across SA, I have heard their concerns about the services that affect them and their aspirations and ideas for the future of our State. They have told me what they need to live better, more connected, supported, healthier, safer and happier lives.

Transport consistently features in the top five issues raised by children and young people. It is vital that the Government involves children and young people in decisions about transport so that they can provide their unique insights both as young people today and as the voice of future adult populations.

Understanding the nuances and complexity of young people's experiences will provide the Government and its agencies with insights into how best to focus their coordinated efforts to best uphold their rights. This is the generation we need to thrive if SA is to prosper in the future.

My Safe and Sound report<sup>i</sup> highlights the views and experiences of young people on public transport based on my 2022 survey of young people across the State. For this submission, I have extracted the responses to this survey of those young people from the northern suburbs to provide you with valuable insights into what they said about public transport in and around the area.

The paper addresses the key issues and opportunities for the northern suburbs being considered in the transport study, including liveability, public transport, and active transport. Specifically, it will highlight:

- how young people use public transport
- what mode of transport they use predominantly
- what would encourage young people to use more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport or cycling / walking
- what improvements young people would like to see made to the network and services they use.

The most significant challenge young people identify as a barrier to using public and active transport is safety. Transport is central to how young people experience their community and means that any barriers impact their capacity to participate fully in almost every aspect of their lives.

Most of all, young people want to be given the opportunity to have a voice in the decisions that affect them. The voices of children and young people will be critical to the success of the Northern Adelaide Transport Study, and I recommend that the study engages meaningfully and appropriately with children and young people to thoroughly understand their unique and diverse needs.

Their desire for places in which they live, learn, earn, and play requires an inter-agency, coordinated approach to planning that meets their priorities for accessibility, connectivity and safety.

Specifically, I recommend:

1. Actively engaging children and young people from the northern suburbs in the consultation process for the Northern Adelaide Transport Study.
2. Address children and young people's safety concerns on public transport with better street lighting at shelters and near bus stops, and by offering more frequent bus, tram, and train services. These need to come with synchronised connections so that they're not left waiting for long periods or forced to walk extended distances in the dark.
3. Upgrade public transport infrastructure and facilities, including bus, train and tram stops, stations and shelters with access to USB charging ports at stops and onboard.
4. Introduce free travel to and from school and sport for children and young people from low-income families by expanding the School Card Scheme.
5. Increase digital accessibility for those travelling on public transport through provision of free Wi-Fi on all public transport and at train stations. This will enable children and young people to make the most of their travel time, while simultaneously improving the accuracy of timetables and tracking services via mobile applications, which they increasingly rely upon.
6. Enable children and young people to take more active journeys by providing safe ways to school, including footpaths, safe pedestrian crossings, separate bike lanes and paths, with good street lighting and effective signage. Introduce speed limits around schools, playgrounds, and shops in line with those recommended by the World Health Organisation.<sup>ii</sup>

Yours sincerely,



**Helen Connolly**

Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Adelaide, South Australia

## Introduction

Transport is central to how young people experience their community and affects almost every aspect of their lives. Young people's access to a full range of cheap, reliable, consistent and integrated transport options is not just a 'nice to have' – it is an essential component of their full participation in society as active and engaged citizens.

I frequently hear that children and young people in the northern suburbs, as well as those further away, that they never visit Adelaide because neither their parents nor schools can afford to take them.

Young people describe how poor access to public transport limits their ability to access education, employment and social activities. Many young people said they regularly travel 1-2 hours each day to attend school, sport and work. Reliance on public transport that may not be regular, cheap or reliable can be a real barrier to seeking and keeping employment.

Add to this the fact that public transport routes in Adelaide primarily travel along major arterial routes in a hub and spoke configuration and the transport challenge becomes daunting. Many young people have expressed that they need to travel against the grain, both within and between suburbs, often for relatively short distances. This means they may lose hours from their day taking two buses or a bus and a train to travel the three or four kilometres needed to get to a part-time job that offers them crucial work hours after school or on weekends. And young people who are hampered by longer travel times on public transport are less likely to be called in for extra hours during a rush period.

Worries about personal safety on all forms of public transport are a major concern for young people across SA, particularly girls. These worries extend to walking through, or waiting in, public spaces, especially at night. Young people have described how important night-time lighting is and how reassured they are when they see businesses open late so they can be confident that there are some responsibly adults around in case they need help. For young people who rely on public transport at all hours of the day and evening, travelling on empty train carriages and waiting around deserted bus compounds can lead to significant feelings of anxiety and vulnerability in relation to their personal safety.

There are strong links between children and young people's mobility and their overall social inclusion and wellbeing. Children and young people are among the most transport disadvantaged members of their community. Without alternative modes of transport (such as having a driver's license or parents, friends, and caregivers to give them a lift), children and young people can become socially excluded or isolated.

Transport disadvantage has a demonstrable impact on school attendance, gaining and maintaining employment, as well as on a child or young person's capacity to make and maintain their social connections. This is further exacerbated for those who have a disability, and those of low socio-economic status.

Consistently, children and young people have said they want safe, affordable, efficient and convenient public transport services, safer roads and alternate transport corridors for

cyclists, skaters and pedestrians. They recognise that the better these alternative modes of transport and their associated infrastructure are, the fewer cars will be on the road, leading to safer streets overall, especially in urban areas. Young people who use bicycles as their connective transport describe how they struggle taking bikes on and off trams and trains. The ticketing requirements and lack of understanding from adult passengers and transit staff make the experience unpleasant and inefficient. The fact that bikes cannot be taken on buses at all shuts off another transport option and hampers their mobility.

## Engage children and young people in the process

Understanding the nuances and complexity of young people's experiences will provide insights into where the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, local government, and other agencies need to focus their coordinated efforts to support current and future generations across the northern suburbs. Best practice includes engaging children and young people in the development of public policies and considering their views and experiences as residents and transport users will be vital to the success of this study's outcomes.

There is no specific mention of children and young people in the study's reference material, and I urge the engagement team to ensure this often-forgotten cohort is given appropriate opportunities to participate.

To understand their diverse interests, it will be important to hear firsthand from children and young people from a variety of backgrounds, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people;
- Children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds;
- Those with caring responsibilities;
- LGBTQIA+ young people; and
- Children and young people with a disability.

Young people have unique perspectives on what makes a place tick. They provide lived insight into how to attract, train and retain young talent; how to be resilient, how to be clean and green; and how to ensure our actions are inclusive and visionary. Young people have developed views about both the benefits and negative aspects of growing up in different parts of Adelaide. They know what they want, and they would like to be invited to participate in meaningful opportunities to share their ideas with decision makers and community leaders.

## What young people in the northern suburbs say about transport

In 2022, I surveyed young people about their use of public transport, the results of which informed my report *Safe And Sound*.<sup>iii</sup> For this submission, I have summarised the responses to this survey of the 400 participants who were from the northern suburbs. The results of this group were comparable to those from young people across the State with many shared concerns and suggestions.

The participants came from a wide range of areas right across the northern suburbs. They ranged from 12 to 20 years of age and were mostly 18 years and under. They identified as a mixture of male, female, non-binary or other, and included those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who identified as LGBTQIA+, those with a disability, those with caring responsibilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The majority were secondary school students, some had jobs, and a few were TAFE, university or primary school students.

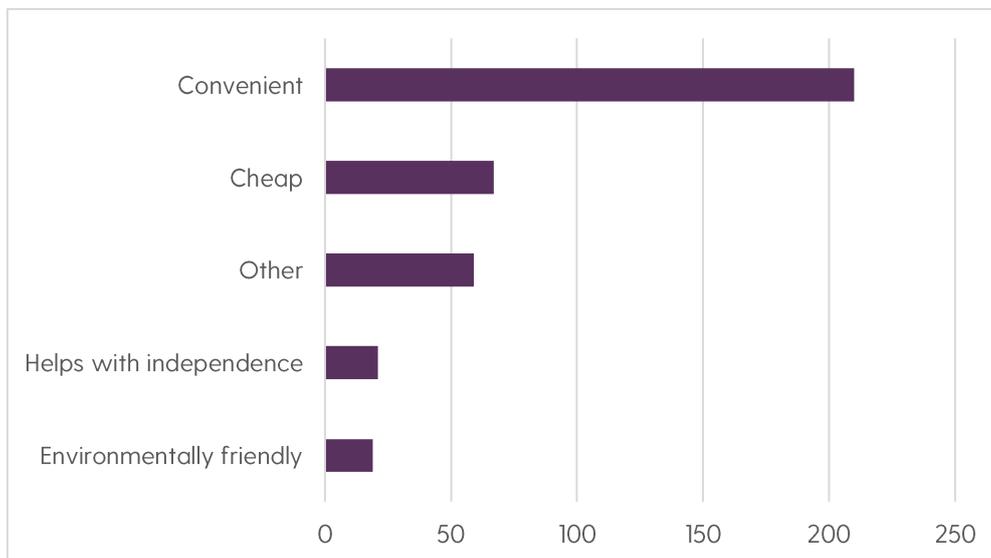
44 per cent of respondents said they used public transport either most days or every day, with the rest using it once or twice a week (17 per cent) or less regularly. Bus was by far the most frequently used form of public transport (78 per cent used this most often), with some using train, tram or two or more forms. 45 percent said that public transport was very important to them, 37 per cent that it was somewhat important and only 18 per cent said it wasn't at all important.

### What young people like about public transport

Young people tell me that public transport is a vital part of their independence. It provides them with an accessible and affordable way to travel to school, training, or university, to meet up with friends, get to and from work, and enjoy sport, socialising and other recreational activities; all without having to attain a driver's licence or rely on a parent or caregiver to drive them where they need to be when they need to be there.

While not everyone had something positive to say about public transport, many positives were identified. Not having to depend on their parents or carers for transport is critical to many young people's confidence and self-sufficiency, allowing them the freedom and independence they need to live their own lives. Some young people said they use public transport because they have no other way of getting to school, work or to their social engagements. They said it meant they could "get to places they can't otherwise get to" in a way that is mostly safe, affordable, and accessible.

## What do you like about public transport?



*“Public transport is a lot more environmentally friendly”* – 17 year old, male, **Wynn Vale**

*“It provides independence and allows me to make plans when my parents are unavailable”* – 16 year old with a disability, trans masculine, **Walkley Heights**

*“Family doesn't have a car, so public transport is very important for me to get to school/work”* – 17 year old with a disability, male, **Munno Para West**

*“My parents are both working many hours to support my family, so I need to get myself to school and to work.”* – 16 year old from a CALD background, female, **Northfield**

*“As a young carer I don't have access to a private vehicle either learning to drive myself or a family member driving me around, therefore I need to feel safe getting from point A to B in my everyday life as without it I would be stuck inside”* – 19 year old carer, female, **Lightsview**

*“Buses (especially to or in the city) have separate lanes and sections that make public transport times sometimes, more efficient than driving. In addition to this, public transport allows me to go from one place to another without having to drive as it is often difficult to find parking. I also like that there are a large number of public transport points which allows me to get from one place to another in a relatively simple manner.”* – 18 year old from a CALD background, female, **Walkley Heights**

*“I like buses and how with the newer ones have gotten usb plugs to charge my phone”* – 19 year old, non-binary, **Salisbury**

*“Most areas of Adelaide where it's hard to find parking, can be reached by bus. It's also a bit cheaper than travelling by fuel. And since I take multiple buses under 1 hour, they don't charge me for it as well.”* – 17 year old from a CALD background, female, **Kilburn**

## What young people don't like about public transport

Children and young people are extremely worried about other adults who use public transport and their own safety in general. Respondents said that public transport services often arrive late and sometimes not at all – leaving them stranded so that they're late for school or work. This was especially true on weekends and outside peak travel times. They reported that infrequent services not only leave children and young people waiting in unsafe, unsheltered stops and stations, they also pose considerable barriers to socialising, engaging in recreational and sporting activities, and maintaining casual, part-time or full-time employment.

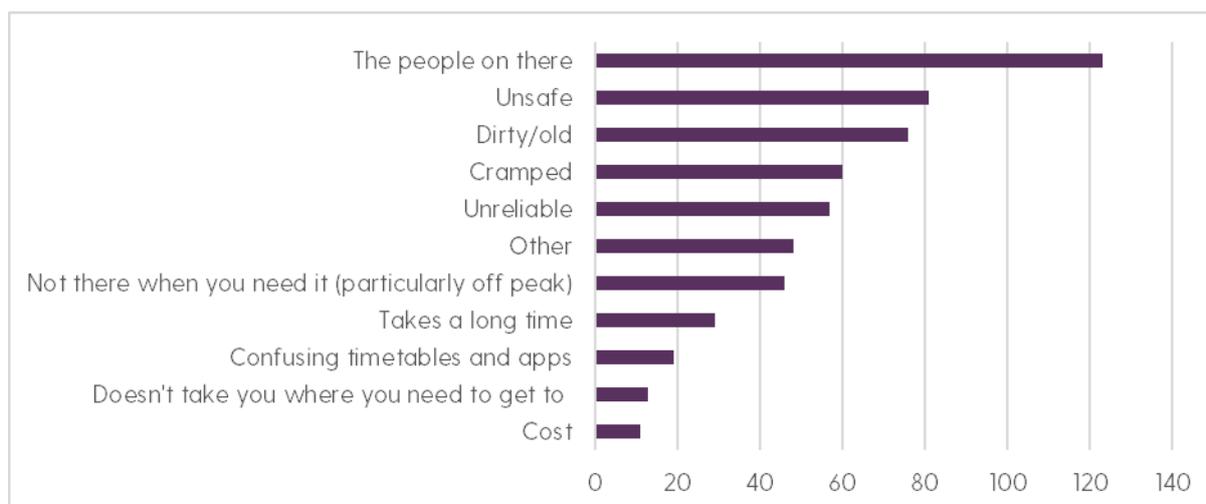
In addition to this, young people noted that many Adelaide Metro services require passengers to transit in and out of the city to travel between suburbs. They expressed a need for better, more direct inter-suburban routes that go across suburbs rather than purely in and out of Adelaide City.

Other issues they raised related to difficulties knowing when transport would arrive, and difficulty using the Adelaide Metro apps to plan and track their journeys.

Survey respondents also said many of the buses were “old, smelly, dirty, or otherwise poorly maintained”. They wanted modernised, safe, environmentally friendly, and accessible transport services.

Young people also said they wanted increased accessibility for people with a disability. Respondents with a disability said they wanted better help from drivers and transport staff when getting on and off public transport, and more seats that were designed specifically for people with disabilities. One young person with a vision impairment reported that they often struggled to find a seat or felt judged for using dedicated disabled seating because their disability was not visible.

## What don't you like about public transport?



“Sometimes public transport (buses for example) arrive either significantly earlier or later than scheduled which causes disruptions and unclarities in relation to transit times. In addition to this, something I do like particularly like about public transport is the fact that some buses stop running during certain hours or on weekends. This sometimes makes it more difficult for me to plan trips and transits as on weekends the 501 bus to Mawson Lakes is not active.” – 18 year old from a CALD background, female, **Walkley Heights**

“It can be overly late or overly early and I wish there was an app for tracking them instead of going online. There is an app but it doesn't work.” – 16 year old, **Salisbury Downs**

“crowding, druggy people, loud people, teenagers that smoke or vape, eshays” – 17 year old from a CALD background , female, **Pooraka**

“My local bus only runs during peak times so I have a long walk home” – 19 year old carer, female, **Lightsview**

“The routes can be confusing or certain paths can not be possible. For example I used to ride the bus to my old school and when I moved to the school just down the hill there was no longer a direct path and it would take around a hour or two just to get from a to b” – 16 year old with a disability, male, **Fairview Park**

“I find that bus services around the northern suburbs are sparse and unreliable at times. The train is fine, but I have had plenty of difficulty getting to and from the station when I take the bus there (particularly salisbury area)” – 20 year old, female, **Hewett**

### Addressing Safety Concerns

Most young people reported that when using public transport they felt very or somewhat safe. For these young people, catching public transport was often a safer alternative to walking long distances – especially at night. However, a significant number report not feeling safe either getting to public transport, waiting, or on the bus/train.

Under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* each State authority “must, in carrying out its function or exercising its powers, protect, respect and seek to give effect to the rights set out from time to time in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child”. Rights relevant to transport call for agencies to always do that which is in the best interests of the child (Article 3), including keeping children safe.

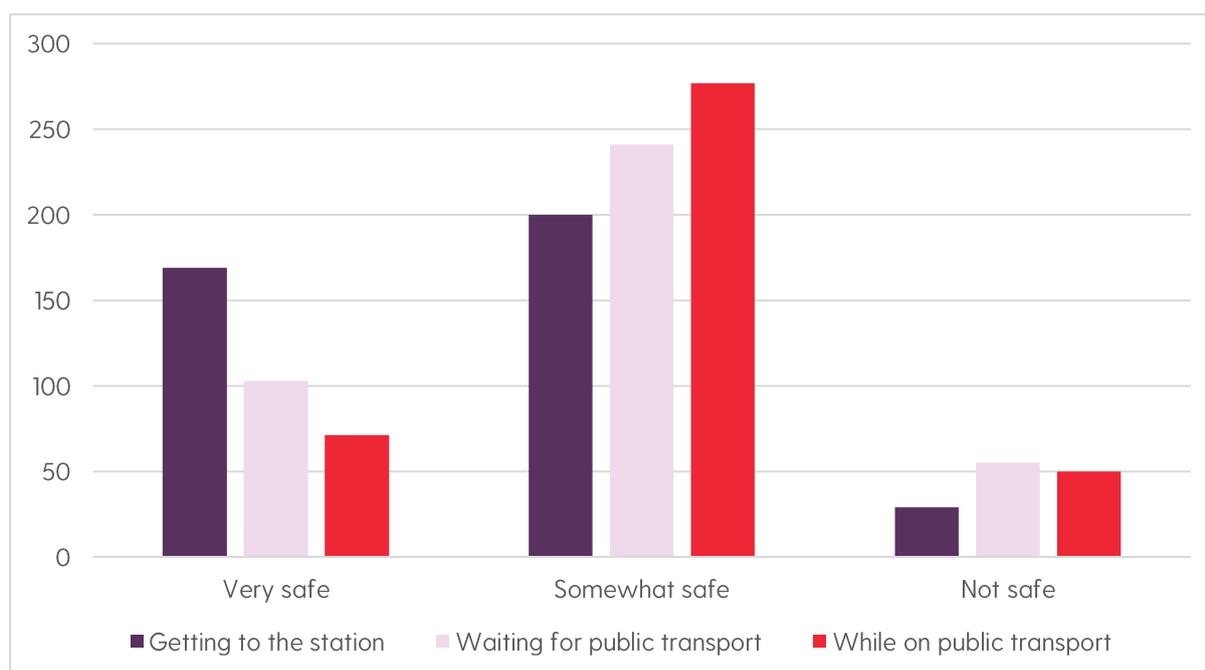
Similarly, under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, statutory bodies (including those bodies who administer passenger transport services on which children are carried for a fare) must comply with provision of child safe environments. To support child safe environments, South Australia established a Child Safe Environments, Principles of Good Practice Guide, which has been in place since 2012. This guide contains overarching principles that organisations must follow to ensure creation of a child safe environment. These include but are not limited to embedding child

safety and wellbeing into organisational leadership, governance, culture, and training, with an emphasis on best practice in creating child safe environments.

Despite the accessibility, cost and convenience of public transport, and the independence it affords young people, survey responses highlighted concerns young people have about the safety of public transport, as well as the anti-social, and in some situations, criminal behaviour of other passengers they've witnessed.

Worries about their personal safety while travelling on all forms of public transport are a constant concern for many young people across the northern suburbs, regardless of economic and social circumstances. This extends to walking through or waiting in public spaces, especially at night. They have told me how important nighttime lighting is to their sense of safety and security, and how reassuring it is when they see businesses open late so that they know responsible adults are still around to assist should they need help. For young people who rely on public transport, enclosed spaces like empty train carriages and buses compound their feelings of vulnerability. Seeing 'creepy or drunk adults' at places like bus shelters, train stations and the Interchange, can also impact on a young person's mobility.

### How safe do you feel?

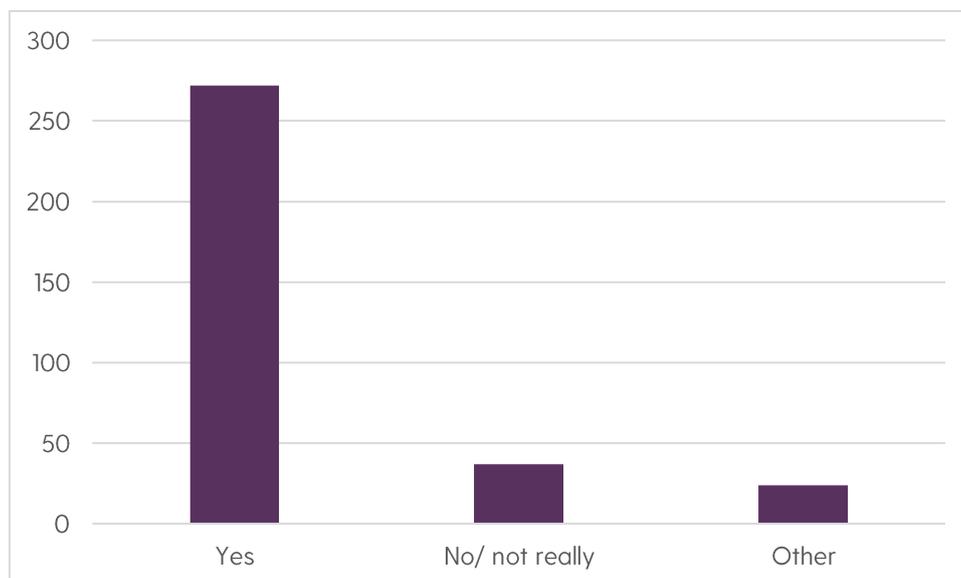


Of those respondents who said they did not feel safe, 103 were female and 23 were male.

*"Tea tree plaza interchange is unsafe with many young children vaping in public and traveling in packs"* – 16 year old from a CALD background, female, **Banksia Park**

*"The people that act inappropriate and who hit on younger girls and guys. Because that has Recently happened to me last week"* – 13 year old with a disability, female, **Burton**

### Does it make a difference travelling at night compared to during the day?



Children and young people in the northern suburbs are much more wary of travelling at night compared to during the daytime and many avoid doing so at all. This situation is exacerbated by fewer services being available at night meaning they have to wait for longer in places where they feel insecure and have to walk further to get to and from transport stops.

*“Although I don’t use it at night it is a choice I made due to the fact I don’t feel safe”*  
– 18 year old, female, **Walkley Heights**

*“The later at night it is the more sketchy it gets especially since there’s not light by any of the bus stops close to me”* – 19 year old, non-binary, **Salisbury**

*“Yes, at bus stops at night (particularly interchanges such as Paradise, Klemzig and TTG) it is often poorly lit and very quiet sometimes I feel as though if I were to disappear while waiting for the bus no one would know”* – 19 year old carer, female, **Lightsview**

*“Yes, night is more unsafe, I have been sexualising assaulted on a bus at night multiple times.”* – 16 year old, female, **Hope Valley**

*“Yes. At night there are people who may have had alcohol, illegal substances and there are generally stranger people. I’m uncomfortable travelling alone at night as a female presenting person. I’ve been cat called, stared at and have had people sit directly next to me even if there are many seats free. I always make the effort to get home as soon as possible so I don’t have to be in that situation.”* – 16 year old, non-binary, **Gawler**

*“Travelling at night is harder because for some reason I have to switch busses more often, and waiting in the dark for the next bus is scary.”* – 16 year old from a CALD background, female, **Northfield**

## Public transport would be safer if...

Young people have many positive and practical suggestions for improving safety on public transport and at stops/stations.

To improve safety on public transport, young people said they want to see greater levels of security that includes a stronger presence of Adelaide Metro staff on trains, trams and buses, as well as at stations, stops and platforms. They believe this would discourage antisocial behaviour and keep younger and more vulnerable passengers safe. They wanted to know that a security guard, or the bus or tram driver, could and would handle nuisance behaviour and manage threatening situations if they occur – especially at night. One young person's survey response noted that "trains with security guards or personnel in the carriages feel a lot safer".

Young people want to see drivers pay greater attention to what is happening on the bus and be trained to intervene in unsafe situations. They want to see drivers given greater control over who is allowed to get on a bus or tram, so that people who are obviously under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or otherwise behaving anti-socially, could be denied entry by the driver, or removed from the service by the driver or public transport personnel if this was deemed necessary.

Young people said that increasing safety measures for children and young people should also include improving safety measures for women, CALD and gender-diverse people, and those living with disability. They proposed more school buses be introduced so school students can travel safely and separately to adults.

*"they could have phone chargers"* – 16 year old carer, female, **Salisbury East**

*"There were more lights around suburban or isolated stops"* – 17 year old from a CALD background, female, **Salisbury**

*"there was a security guard or the bus driver would be able to handle someone being a nuisance or threatening."* – 13 year old, male, **Paralowie**

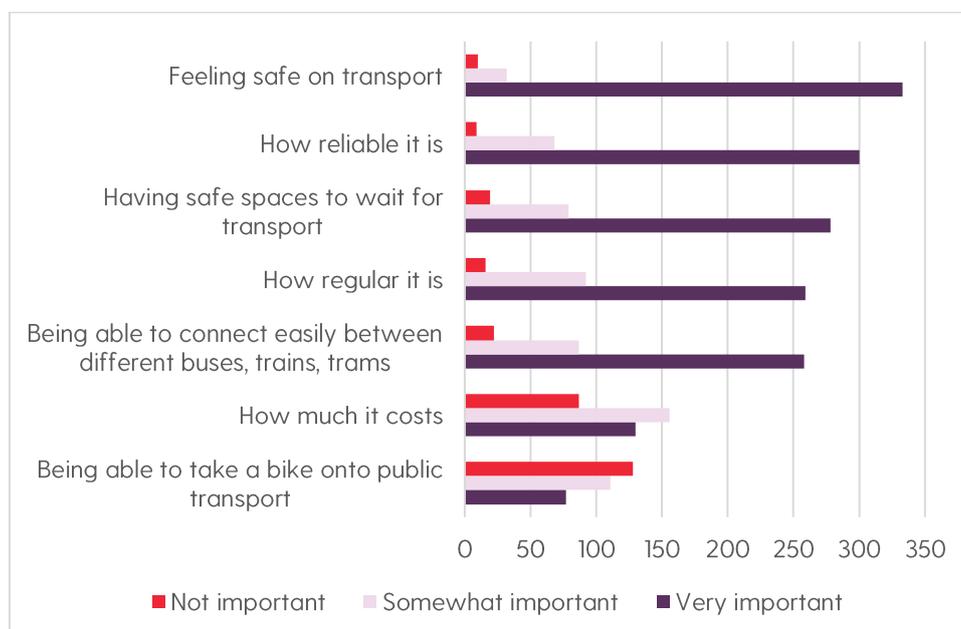
*"A route checkers like In the city or something was placed in paradise interchange. So I wouldn't have to guess the buses."* – 17 year old from a CALD background, male, **Para Hills**

*"There were more people/security people at bigger bus stops."* – 13 year old, female, **Mawson Lakes**

*"You could access seats near the driver for minors to feel safer"* – 16 year old, female, **Hope Valley**

## What is most important to you when using public transport?

For children and young people to use public transport more often, they need it to be safe, reliable and cheap. They would also like to take bikes on buses and trains so that they can cycle to and from their destination.



## Public transport would be better if...

Young people have many suggestions for ways to improve the overall safety and accessibility of public transport for their age group. Suggestions include improvements to safety overall, along with youth focused timetabling, ticketing and payment options, improving stops and station infrastructure, and focusing on accessibility for people living with a disability.

In addition to young people's desire for up-to-date apps and tracking services, they would also like to see timetabling that reflects the needs of young people; particularly throughout inter peak times and on more direct routes. They would also like a greater frequency of bus, tram and train services at the times they're looking to use them. Young people especially wanted more frequent transport services made available at night, so they aren't left waiting alone at stops and stations in the dark. They want to be able to rely on public transport services during inter peak times and at night in the same way they rely on these services at peak times during the day. They also want services to 'sync up' with other routes, ensuring smooth transfers between trains, trams, and major bus routes, and without lengthy waits in between. Having their needs considered when timetabling decisions are being made would assist with this.

Many of the new metro buses and trains now have USB charging ports installed, with young people keen to see on all public transport services, particularly given that low phone battery levels can be a problem. As children and young people rely heavily on their mobile phones to keep track of time, plan their journeys, and contact friends and family,

they felt having the capacity to charge their phone on public transport was imperative to their safety. It not only enables them to contact friends, parents, or caregivers, before and when they arrive at their destination, it also allows them to contact police or security services if they feel unsafe.

The availability and affordability of transport underpins the capacity of children and young people to engage with school, employment, sport, hobbies, interests, and other social and recreational activities. When transport is lacking, unreliable, unsafe, or unaffordable, it has a disproportionate impact on the quality of children and young people's lives, including their ability to maintain employment or friendships.

While we know that most young people can to some extent rely on their parents to transport them to and from commitments, some parents and carers can't afford a private vehicle, can't drive, or don't have time to ferry their children around. It is unfair that these children should miss out on education, employment or activities as a result.

*"It was cheaper and more reliable"* – 18 year old, female, **Walkley Heights**

*"it was cleaner"* – 13 year old, female, **Andrews Farm**

*"I cannot stress enough that it should be easy to catch connecting public transport without waiting 30+ minutes between services. I don't feel that it is easy or accessible to do this at the moment."* – 20 year old, female, **Hewett**

*"Connection between suburbs would be great. The public transport network in Adelaide is not well connected and you have to go into the city before you can go to another suburb"* – 20 year old, female, **Gawler East**

*"Timetables and schedules were reliable and accurate."* – 18 year old, male, **Salisbury Downs**

*"Buses ran throughout the day"* – 19 year old carer, female, **Lightsview**

*"there were more direct buses rather than having to catch 2 or more and worry about missing either"* – 17 year old, female, Para Hills West

*"More acces for hidden disabilities. While disability seating is available I've often had experience where I have been told to move because I don't look disabled. My disability is invisible and makes it so I and unable to stand for long period of time. It can make catching public transport very difficult during peak travel times"* – 16 year old with a disability, female, **Surrey Downs**

*"there are extra places to charge your phones and designated places for students to sit just like those who are elderly. some older people on the train are perverted and touch you when you sit next to them and its uncomfortable and unsafe as a teenager."* – 16 year old, female, **Parafield Gardens**

*"better lighting, phone chargers, more frequent"* – 18 year old, female, **Oakden**

*"Bikes on busses"* – 14 year old, male, **Greenwith**

## Child friendly communities

In general, South Australia's children and young people are proud of where they live. They feel good about what is around them and care about how visitors perceive their suburbs. However, they also call for more youth specific and friendly infrastructure that will support their development and inspire their career aspirations.

I have heard from many children and young people about what they like and dislike about their local environments, the difficulties they have moving around, and their concerns about needing fast internet access and charging facilities wherever they go. Where young people live, the facilities available to them locally, and their ease of access to school, activities and employment have an enormous impact on their lives. However, their views are seldom considered.

Committing to providing child friendly and child safe environments for children and young people is not merely something that is 'nice to do'. It is a requirement under international conventions that are embedded in State Legislation and is essential to the prosperity of the State.

Having infrastructure specifically designed to meet the needs of young people involves investing in creating places and spaces in which they can gather, express themselves, and see themselves being positively reflected within their local communities. This kind of shared investment in local infrastructure helps to enable them to develop a personal identity, while also contributing to building local sustainability through connection, confidence building, and creativity amongst young people.

Investing in youth specific infrastructure sends children and young people the clear message that they are valued and important members of their local communities and that their local area is a place where they will want to stay.

When asked what a youthful place is, young people have told me that it is somewhere where 'anything is possible' where 'tribes' of young people can get together to try out new ideas, express themselves and just 'be young and hang out' without fear of being hassled, judged or moved on.<sup>iv</sup>

New developments and infill rarely take these needs into account, and this shows. In 2020, the Australian Urban Observatory found that liveability is poor beyond Adelaide's inner suburbs, in terms of economic, social, environmental and health objectives, as well as the availability of affordable housing close to public transport.<sup>v</sup> This includes access to childcare, community centres, libraries, GPs, sporting facilities, swimming pools schools, museums, cinemas and theatres.

Access to speciality shops and precincts are a major reason for young people to travel to specific localities, with many young people expressing the view that clustering fashion, music and coffee together is the best way to activate areas in which young people will gather.

Young people have told us they want public spaces that are well planned, have open borders, allow connections, virtually and physically, are open, inclusive, public, and welcoming. They want places which offer things to do and places to be, including

somewhere that you can speak your mind, stand up for what you believe in and express your rights.

Young people said that having a local central hub for young people to gather is critical to their needs within their community. This hub would ideally be an all-weather structure, open and centrally located, with space to sit on the ground, as well as other seating. The hub should be big enough for high volumes of young people to gather, and for it to be 'neutral territory'.

Creating spaces where groups of young people can coexist and connect but are also able maintain their independence is considered critical. A space that is neutral, communal and owned by young people has the hallmarks of an ideal youth hub. The hub must also have interconnectivity, Wi-Fi and phone charging stations, with access to high-quality Wi-Fi seen as essential.

They would like to have the opportunity to experience and have opportunities to participate in creative pursuits locally and young people have told me about the significance of seeing more colour, art and greenery, both from an aesthetic perspective, and in terms of the pride and optimism this generates.

Clean public toilets should be an essential feature of any community space, with handwashing facilities, soap, sanitary bins and free period products to ensure that those who menstruate feel comfortable in public places during their periods. Otherwise, we know that many girls avoid undertaking sport and social activities for fear of being caught short.<sup>vi</sup>

## Encouraging active transport

We know that Australian children are among the least active in the world, with only 18 per cent of Australian children aged 5–17 years of age getting the 60 minutes of daily physical exercise they need to lead a healthy lifestyle.<sup>vii</sup> The Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommend that children aged 5–17 years should do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intense physical activity every day<sup>viii</sup> – in 2021, only a quarter of children aged 5–17 years reported achieving this level.<sup>ix</sup>

Physical activity in children and young people is particularly important as childhood is the most sensitive period of human development in which to promote long-lasting health-enhancing behaviours. Studies highlight the connection between physical activity and mental health and wellbeing. Even as little as 20 minutes of exercise per day helps children concentrate and engage better in class, improves their cognitive performance, and builds their confidence and self-esteem.<sup>x</sup>

Young people are aware of the importance of regular physical activity but, for teenagers in particular, competing commitments of study, social life, extra-curricular activities and part-time work make it challenging for them to meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Those children and young people who said they didn't have time to do any more physical activity, understood that travelling to school by foot or bike is an easy way to engage in physical activity in a way that reduces the need to find additional time in their day.

## Poor walkability

We cannot expect children to play outside and run around if there is nowhere safe for them to go that they can get to without a car.

We know that some areas of Adelaide are considered entirely reliant on private car travel. The Global Observatory of Healthy and Sustainable Cities<sup>xi</sup> found that Adelaide ‘does not appear to have transport planning policies incorporating health-focussed actions or air pollution policies related to transport or land use planning.’ Only 54 per cent of residents have nearby access to public transport stops with regular services and no neighbourhoods in Adelaide have the population density levels recommended by the World Health Organisation to increase physical activity.<sup>xii</sup>

As a result, South Australian children and young people are some of the most obese and least active in the world. According to the 2021 South Australian Population Health Survey 12.6 per cent of children are obese.<sup>xiii</sup>

Active travel to school is an easy way for kids to be physically active as part of their daily routine. However, poorly designed infrastructure, lack of safe footpaths and adequate cycle lanes, and road safety concerns are a barrier to walking and cycling in most neighbourhoods.

Fear of road accidents means parents are reluctant to let their children outside by themselves – a look at their local area will often lead them to conclude that it is not safe for children to play, cycle or even walk there. In Australia, transport injuries are the most common cause of death and the second most common cause of injury resulting in hospital admission for children aged 0-14 years.<sup>xiv</sup> Across SA, there were 218 road crashes in 2020 which resulted in a pedestrian casualty, of which 38 were under the age of 18.<sup>xv</sup>

The Australian Urban Observatory has provided walkability data for Adelaide’s metropolitan suburbs.<sup>xvi</sup> The ‘walkability’ of a route is calculated based on the proximity of schools and other destinations, street/path connectivity, and dwelling density. Many parts of the northern suburbs are deemed car-dependent, with Vista, Munno Para West, Hillbank and Andrews Farm having some of the worst walkability scores in Greater Adelaide, meaning they are deemed entirely car dependent.<sup>xvii</sup>

## Improve traffic and road safety around schools

It is essential that South Australia invests in improvements to the walkability and safety of its neighbourhoods, particularly around schools and other places where children and young people meet, shop and play.

Children and young people have reported that they currently do not feel safe when arriving and leaving schools due to the traffic at those times and they have solutions for making it safer. They want cars to slow down, more traffic crossings, safer footpaths, and separate bike lanes. Governing Councils have also raised this as an issue requiring an urgent inter-agency response.

I recommend that the State invests in the provision of safe footpaths, cycle paths and crossings within the immediate area of all schools, shops, sports facilities and parks, with

good street lighting, effective signage, and speed restrictions in line with those recommended by the World Health Organisation.<sup>xviii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Safe and Sound: Views and experiences of young people on public transport, CCYP, June 2023, <https://www.ccyp.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Safe-and-Sound-Report.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>iii</sup> Safe and Sound: Views and experiences of young people on public transport, CCYP, June 2023, <https://www.ccyp.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Safe-and-Sound-Report.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Youthful Adelaide: What young people have said will make Adelaide more youthful, CCYP, April 2019, <https://www.ccyp.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Youthful-Adelaide.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Healthy and Sustainable City Indicators Report: Comparisons with 25 cities internationally: Adelaide, Australia, Global Observatory of Healthy & Sustainable Cities, 2022, [https://rmit.figshare.com/articles/report/Adelaide\\_Australia\\_Healthy\\_and\\_Sustainable\\_City\\_Indicators\\_Report\\_Comparisons\\_with\\_25\\_cities\\_internationally/19614009](https://rmit.figshare.com/articles/report/Adelaide_Australia_Healthy_and_Sustainable_City_Indicators_Report_Comparisons_with_25_cities_internationally/19614009)

<sup>vi</sup> Menstruation Matters, CCYP, 2021: <https://www.ccyp.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Menstruation-Matters.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/health/physical-activity>

<sup>viii</sup> Physical Activity and Exercise Guidelines for all Australians, Department for Health and Aged Care, [https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians?utm\\_source=health.gov.au&utm\\_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm\\_campaign=digital\\_transformation#summary-by-age](https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm_campaign=digital_transformation#summary-by-age)

<sup>ix</sup> South Australian Population Health Survey, 2021 Annual Report, Children, <https://www.wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/assets/downloads/SAPHS/SAPHS-2021-Annual-Children-Report.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School, Editors: Harold W. Kohl, III and Heather D. Cook. Authors: Committee on Physical Activity and Physical Education in the School Environment, Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine, 2013, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK201500/>

<sup>xi</sup> Healthy and Sustainable City Indicators Report: Comparisons with 25 cities internationally: Adelaide, Australia, Global Observatory of Healthy & Sustainable Cities, 2022, [https://rmit.figshare.com/articles/report/Adelaide\\_Australia\\_Healthy\\_and\\_Sustainable\\_City\\_Indicators\\_Report\\_Comparisons\\_with\\_25\\_cities\\_internationally/19614009](https://rmit.figshare.com/articles/report/Adelaide_Australia_Healthy_and_Sustainable_City_Indicators_Report_Comparisons_with_25_cities_internationally/19614009)

<sup>xii</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>xiii</sup> SA Health, 2021. South Australian Population Health Survey 2021 Annual Report – Children. Available at <https://www.wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/assets/downloads/SAPHS/SAPHS-2021-AnnualChildren-Report.pdf>.

<sup>xiv</sup> Car and Road Safety, Kidsafe, <https://kidsafe.com.au/car-road-safety>

<sup>xv</sup> Road Crash Data, 2020, SAPOL, accessed from Data SA: <https://data.sa.gov.au/data/dataset/road-crash-data>

<sup>xvi</sup> Liveability Report for Adelaide, Australian Urban Observatory, 2020, [https://auo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AUO\\_Scorecard\\_Adelaide.pdf](https://auo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AUO_Scorecard_Adelaide.pdf)

<sup>xvii</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>xviii</sup> Streets for Life campaign calls for 30 km/h urban streets to ensure safe, healthy, green and liveable cities, WHO, 17 May 2021, <https://www.who.int/news/item/17-05-2021-streets-for-life-campaign-calls-for-30-km-h-urban-streets-to-ensure-safe-healthy-green-and-liveable-cities>