



Transport
State Transit

Passenger Relations Plan 2019 – 2020

Introduction

State Transit operates as a service provider in the Transport cluster managed by Transport for NSW. We operate one of the largest bus networks in the world with the aim of delivering reliable, safe, clean and integrated services that meet the needs of our customers in a sustainable way.

The Passenger Relations Plan is submitted under Clause 17.3 and outlines the Sydney Metropolitan Bus Service Contracts for State Transit administered by Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) for three Sydney Metropolitan regions (SMBSC7, SMBSC8 and SMBSC9). We aim to be accessible and responsive to our customers, stakeholders, members of the community and staff. We have a strong commitment to responding to feedback and ensure that the promotion of, and awareness of the complaints handling process, is a focus within the organisation.

Our commitment to customer service is supported by six main aims:

- To ensure that the service delivered reflects the travel needs of customers;
- To operate bus services with excellent safety standards for the benefit of customers, staff, the general public and their property;
- To provide bus services that meet high standards of frequency, timeliness, reliability and cleanliness;
- To provide customers with complete, easily understood and up-to-date service information;
- To develop a good reputation for customer service through polite, courteous and helpful staff; and
- To make services more accessible for the community.

Complaints and Enquiry Handling

State Transit customer feedback is managed through the consumer affairs software system known as Salesforce. The official transport cluster-wide feedback management system Salesforce is used by the Transport for NSW call centre, which records and actions all customer feedback (including compliments, suggestions, queries and complaints), allocating them to each agency.

State Transit has a centralised customer service model who provides timely, accurate responses to customer feedback and ensure effective resolution of issues for each operational area. This includes investigation of each case, contacting the customer and requesting advice or additional information from a specialist. All relevant information is recorded into the case using Salesforce.

Extensive analysis of customer concerns is available through a categorisation methodology involving service description (by Route – which is the most customer recalled feature of any bus service) and secondly, by service issues during the journey cycle (planning the trip – waiting for service – on board the conveyance – not related to journey). Similar customer experience issues arise at each point in the journey cycle.

Channels

The primary avenues for customers to provide feedback are:

- Transportnsw.info / 131500 Feedback Line – phone number is prominently displayed, general enquiries are handled by 131500 agents, State Transit feedback/complaints are referred to a specialist feedback line agent who can then enter the case into the official Customer Feedback Management System, Salesforce.
- Email – generated from the 'Contact Us' menu of the transportnsw.info website;
- Direct-to-Depot phone complaints are transferred to the 131500 Feedback Line agents for priority services and recording of the case.
- Written correspondence and emails are entered into Salesforce.

Lost Property

The Transport for NSW website advises customers on how to contact the depot to retrieve lost property. Further, the Transport Info call centre supports customers by providing contact numbers to retrieve a lost item.

A Lost Property Office is located at each depot and is open Monday to Friday between 8am and 4pm for enquiries and collection. A message can be left with the description of the lost property item at any time and a staff member will call back during business hours if the item is located. For urgent lost property outside of business hours (for example, essential medical equipment) customers may call 131500 (24 hours) and they will contact State Transit's Network Control Centre for assistance.

Provision of information to customers

State Transit aims to provide clear, accurate and timely information for customers through a number of alternative distribution channels. State Transit works with Transport for NSW to ensure information is added to the transportnsw.info website and the Transport Management Centre; Transport Info call centre; and bus stop information.

State Transit is committed to ensuring that its customers receive information of any service change or special event arrangements.

Customer information is supplied via the channels listed below.

Itinerary and Journey Planning

- Call centre assisted travel planning (by 131500); and
- Electronically generated travel plans including maps (via transportnsw.info website).

Timetables and Maps

- PDF timetables and maps are available via transportnsw.info or on request;

- Timetables at the majority of bus stops including maps and service information;
- State Transit supports real-time Smartphone apps and the data provided by Transport for NSW.

Other Customer Information

- Regional bus network maps are available on the transportsw.info website;
- Detailed service information at major bus stops, along major corridors and at transport interchanges;
- Snap frame posters for on-bus information;
- Electronic information made available on CCTV monitors in buses;
- Destination signs on the front, side and back of buses;
- Automated, satellite-controlled 'next stop' information on the Metrobus fleet, including scrolling visual and audio messages;
- Various decals (many safety related) – on bus information;
- Accessible service and fare information via transportsw.info;
- Advertising where a service or timetable has changed and the general public needs to be aware of the information; and
- Emergency response from the Traffic Management Centre via media alerts pushed through to Twitter and on transportsw.info website as well as special event signage.

Bus Stop Signage

State Transit uses approximately 6,500 bus stops in its operating area. Signage meets Best Practice Guidelines (version 1, November 2002 or any successor guidelines) issued by TfNSW. The colours and graphics used continue to be upgraded to match the new integrated transport guidelines.

Over 700 stops on strategic corridors are fitted with large-format “plinth” signs, which include detailed service information, stop-specific maps and timetables. The plinth signs are installed by TfNSW meet the requirements of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 issued under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

Secondary stops are fitted with “J” stem bus stop signs, most of which include timetable information.

In Sydney’s CBD, and at other major interchanges, TfNSW manages bus stop infrastructure and information. State Transit continues to support TfNSW with bus stop information initiatives.

Bus Destination Signs

All buses operated by State Transit have electronic destination signs installed on the front and side of the vehicle, as well as an electronic route number sign on the rear. Newer buses have LED signs, which are brighter and clearer, making them easier to read, especially from a distance. The display of information is subject to

a continuous improvement program by State Transit to ensure a consistent, legible and clear presentation of route information.

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

Smart-phone apps and real-time bus arrival

All State Transit services are tracked using the Public Transport Information and Priority System (PTIPS), which is provided by TfNSW. PTIPS provides real-time information for bus arrivals at all bus stops across the network to customers via smart-phone real-time apps. Each bus stop displays a unique number which is used to identify the location.

State Transit will continue to support TfNSW smart phone apps that provide real-time information for buses. This enables customers to view the location of their bus and estimated arrival time at their stop in real time using GPS.

Next-stop information system

All Metrobus vehicles are fitted with an automated next-stop information system. The system, which is GPS controlled, uses dynamic electronic screens on board the bus to display details of the upcoming stop, along with relevant transport connections and local attractions. The system is supplemented with automated audio announcements throughout the bus.

Timetables

State Transit acknowledges the requirement to have service change information available for customers prior to the planned implementation date. Electronic versions of timetables are available on transportnsw.info, with hard copies available on request. Requests for timetables can be made by contacting 131500 transportnsw.info. Timetables and travel information is mailed to customers at their nominated address free of charge. State Transit encourages customers, where possible and if they have the availability, to source timetable information via transportnsw.info.

State Transit will notify its customers in advance of any planned service changes. Depending on the scale of the change. This is done by:

- displaying posters or electronic messaging on buses;
- handing out of flyers to customers at relevant bus stops;
- inserting flyers into affected public timetables as an interim measure before revised timetables are printed;
- working with TfNSW to target local media advising of substantial service alterations; and/or
- conducting a “letter-box drop” to residents in the vicinity of the affected service/s, if changes are significant.

State Transit liaises directly with schools serviced by dedicated school services.

Service Desk and participation in Transport Info 131500 Information

131500 Transport Info is the customer interface of the Integrated Transport Information System (ITIS). It is a multi-modal one stop customer contact service provided through various communications channels including telephony (call centre and interactive voice response {IVR}), website and web-enabled telephony. As part of the transport cluster, State Transit supports ITIS, which is managed by TfNSW. The service began in 1999 and the principal services are outsourced to Serco Asia-Pacific Pty Ltd.

The key elements of Transport Info are the provision of service information, journey and itinerary planning, and customer feedback services.

State Transit will endeavour to provide all last minute service changes to the 131500 Service Desk and Transport Management Centre to improve customer service outcomes. For planned service disruptions, information will be supplied by the relevant depots to State Transit's Customer Relations division, and for unplanned service disruptions, information will be supplied by the relevant depots to State Transit's Network Control Centre to be sent directly to 131500 Transport Info.

Further to this, advice from State Transit and the Transport Management Centre to TfNSW (Customer Technology and Services Division) allows further information to be added as trip notes on the Trip Planner at transportnsw.info.

State Transit supports Transport Info by providing:

- promotion of transportnsw.info inside the bus, on timetables, at bus stops, via service advertisements and announcements and in press releases;
- timetable data using the HASTUS bus schedule data interface files, additional data files to support integration of HASTUS data into transportnsw.info website, paper timetables and customer services brochures. and
- advice for transportnsw.info website content for service changes and late breaking news, as required;
- the interface to the State Transit Salesforce complaints management system in order for call centre to resolve and log feedback cases. The system is a customer affairs system for managing customer feedback from the various channels including phone and website electronic mail;
- periodic expert review of transport service documentation held at the call centre;
- client feedback to call centre management in respect of its meeting State Transit customer service requirements; and
- advice in the various planning and operations meetings as scheduled by TfNSW Digital Products and Services team and to the call centre.

Customer Relations – Complaints Handling Management and Resolution

State Transit ensures the management and resolution of Customer Feedback is undertaken in accordance with TfNSW Customer Complaints and Feedback Management Standard Policy, CP St14002.

State Transit's response time to customer feedback is made within 2 working days of receiving the case at State Transit. The closure target is 70% within 2 working days, and 95% within 30 working days. State Transit will measure the level of customer complaints per 100,000 boardings to ensure that the level of complaints is effectively managed and improved to enhance customer satisfaction. The Key Performance Indicator target is for less than 22 complaints per 100,000 boardings.

State Transit is committed to improving the response time of feedback to customers. All cases received are recorded, investigated thoroughly and statistics from the Customer Management Feedback System are used to enhance the overall performance of services as well as analysing trends.

State Transit is a seven-days-a-week service oriented business, and many of its employees work on a 24-hour roster in order to achieve this. In some instances, the investigation may be carried out outside standard business hours.

State Transit's Customer Feedback Team provide timely and accurate responses to customer feedback. The centralised team work with the depot staff to ensure effective resolution of issues is managed in each operational area.

Customer feedback includes compliments, suggestions, queries and complaints received via transportnsw.info and 131500), letters and from other sources, about State Transit's bus services in Sydney. It is State Transit policy to provide answers to customer feedback in a helpful, accurate and timely manner, following all principles of our customer complaints handling procedures.

State Transit continues to work to improve the response time of complaints to customers.

State Transit and TfNSW have developed policies to ensure staff coordinating feedback are equipped to answer, investigate and record actions in an accurate and timely manner. Specific complaints handling and on the job training is continuously provided to support employees at bus depots and regional offices, who are responsible for liaising with customers.

When dealing with customers, State Transit is committed to improve its complaints handling process by focusing on the following areas:

- respectful treatment – treat customers with courtesy and respect.
- information and accessibility – information is available for customers to provide feedback.
- good communication – keeping customers, where appropriate, updated on the lifecycle of the case.
- taking ownership – trained staff are managing feedback.
- timeliness – we will do our best to deal with your feedback as soon as possible.

- transparency – record and analyse information on our complaint handling processes. Operators at the 131500 Transport Info call centre record feedback received from customers. The details of the feedback is recorded into Salesforce and a unique case reference number is allocated to each case. Upon receipt of the feedback, the Case Manager commences the investigation of the issue, recording notes in Salesforce for reference.

Correspondence received directly by State Transit is also registered in *Salesforce*.

The Customer Feedback Team carries out the management and root cause analysis of cases to assist its operational area. All customer feedback is recorded and reported on, in order to measure performance and analyse trends.

Key benefits of the feedback/complaint handling process are:

- A commitment to resolve all cases to the satisfaction of the customer;
- More than 70% of all cases received by the call centre are closed with the customer at first point of contact;
- Simple and fast referral of cases to specialist officers (when required);
- Statistics can be interpreted in a market research context for future enhancement of overall services. As a by-product of the system, this is essentially cost-free.

Resolution of Customer Concerns before initiating complaints process

Customers now find satisfactory answers to their concerns by listening to the IVR or by viewing the transportnsw.info website. This is particularly so for service interruptions. State Transit aims to maintain the latest information on these channels to optimise this means of resolution and to assist customers with their travel on our services.

Case Capture and First Tier Resolution by Call Centre/ Feedback Agents

If a customer chooses to proceed beyond the website/IVR, they are transferred to a specially trained call centre agent who attempts to provide first tier complaints resolution. At the same time, the agent records and categorises their case in the Salesforce system. The Transport Call Centre contract closure rate is 70% first call resolution of all calls received.

Second Tier Case resolution - Referral to State Transit Depot or Specialist Staff

Where feedback/complaints are not resolved by the call centre agents, cases are referred to State Transit staff for resolution. These are termed call back cases. State Transit will ensure that response times to complaints and enquiries received by telephone, mail and email is within the response time detailed below.

Under the SMBSC requirements, call back case guidelines relating to direct contacts include:

- All cases should be resolved with the customer and closed;
- Response to customer cases should be made (100% of cases) within 2 working days of receiving the case at State Transit;

- Time to closure (i.e. achieving resolution with the customer) will vary according to the type and complexity of the case. The SMBSC closure or resolution target is 70% within 2 working days, and 95% within 30 working days;
- The case officer can use the Salesforce system to enlist the aid of other specialists within State Transit;
- The process aims to be fair to all involved in a complaint – e.g. the case officer may look at CCTV to determine whether incidents have been accurately portrayed;
- State Transit staff undergo appropriate training to ensure they understand the Customer Management System;
- State Transit monitors issues to ensure that every attempt is made to resolve the matters with the customer before finalising the case; and
- All actions on the case are recorded in *Salesforce* and can be further examined for quality control.

High Priority Cases

The call centre can nominate customer concerns as “High Priority” cases. Calls will be made immediately on receipt of these feedback cases. These may involve safety, security, issues involving school children, vehicle accidents and customer experiences involving significant service failures or where an appropriate immediate service recovery response is warranted. These cases are referred to the relevant depot or to a specialist officer and, if necessary, State Transit’s Network Control Centre is notified of any urgent issues.

State Transit’s guarantee of response time to complaints and enquiries under the SMBSC

	Hours measured	KPI
Customer response means the time from which a complaint is received until the time that the customer is contacted in relation to that complaint.	Business hours	100% of all complaints are responded to within 2 business days.
Customer Complaint Resolution means satisfactory closure of customer complaints within an agreed timeframe.	24/7	1. 70% of all complaints are resolved within 2 business days.
Time from the receipt of the complaint until the resolution and closure of the complaint.		2. 95% of all complaints are resolved within 30 business days.

Australian Standard or any successor standard relating to complaints handling

State Transit ensures that the effective and efficient application of the complaints handling process is followed by the use of the Australian Standards – Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for Complaints Handling in organisations, AS ISO 10002 – 2006, as well as the NSW Ombudsman’s requirements. This includes any successor standard issued by Standards Australia relating to complaints handling procedures.

Dealing with emergencies and lost persons including children

In emergencies and instances of lost persons, particularly the elderly and children, the call centre assists in forwarding relevant urgent information to the Network Control Centre where established procedures are activated involving the Police, the State Transit network of bus drivers and supervisors.

The 131500 call centre receives, records, logs and transfers all complaints and feedback to State Transit within the feedback system *Salesforce*. In some cases, calls may be listed as “High Priority” (HP) cases. The call centre works from a listing provided by State Transit, to determine if the case should be treated as a HP case. When dealing with emergencies, such as lost persons cases including children, the call centre would classify this as a HP case and refer it immediately to State Transit for dealing.

“High Priority” cases are indicated via the *Salesforce* system and dealt with immediately. They are sent directly by the call centre to the service delivery area within State Transit. Where there is a case of high sensitivity, the corporate area would directly deal with the complaint. Complaints by children are not defined separately.

Customer Relations Strategy

State Transit’s aim is to deliver a positive experience for customers travelling on our services. Initiatives for the plan period include:

Providing quality customer information

- Participate with TfNSW to enhanced the ITIS Infoline Service;
- Participate with TfNSW and the cluster to ensure the continuous improvement of the current Customer Feedback System;
- Participate in the TfNSW workshop design session, to gather a holistic approach to the Guiding Principles and Policy for Customer Feedback and Complaints Handling for the cluster; and
- Continuously improve PTIPS based real-time customer information services.

Customer Education

- Improve and extend information to customers;
- Continue to work with TfNSW to lift awareness of services for seniors and people with disabilities;

- Collaborate with TfNSW on a customer and pedestrian safety campaign.

Building Customer Service Excellence

- Continue internal communications to staff to improve customer service outcomes.

Achieving Optimum Service Recovery

- Improve methods for informing customers of service changes;
- Improve methods of complaint handling; and
- Improve methods of maintaining accessible services information.

Market Research

- The function of Marketing and Market Research has transferred to TfNSW (Customer Technology and Services Division). The overall direction and design of market research is managed by TfNSW. State Transit will work jointly with TfNSW to achieve key goals.
- State Transit and TfNSW will work to gain a greater understanding of the factors that influence customer behaviour through customer surveys and the analysis of the TfNSW Customer Satisfaction Survey results/data.
- Customer Satisfaction Survey data and feedback will be used in the development of targeted campaigns or further in-depth studies.

Performance Measures

- Achievement of the initiatives above will be measured by project completion and a change in customer perception of services.

General

- State Transit sets agreed measurable objectives prior to any customer relations initiative commencing and will then measure and report on these results against the set objectives.

Customer Satisfaction

- It is assumed that the Customer Satisfaction Surveys conducted by TfNSW will measure all operators' performance in the provision and delivery of customer information.

Customer Relations

- All customer feedback will be recorded and reported on, in order to measure performance and analyse trends.

Programs for customer training

State Transit participates in a number of programs to facilitate the uptake of bus travel by the elderly, disabled or culturally and linguistically diverse.

Marketing to seniors, parents (with prams) and people with disability

State Transit works with TfNSW on campaigns aimed to facilitate the uptake of bus travel by seniors. Passengers travelling with prams, strollers or buggies are welcome on any State Transit service. On wheelchair-accessible buses with designated priority seating areas, it is possible for children to remain in the pram on board the bus. On buses with no designated priority seating areas, the pram must be folded and stowed safely. The situation will vary depending of the model of bus in service. Passenger pram information is available on the Transport info website – transportnsw.info. Further, State Transit will work with TfNSW to deliver relevant programs and initiatives detailed in the 5-year TfNSW Disability Action Plan. Specific actions are outlined in the Accessible Transport 20-year Action Plan.

State Transit will continue to display routes that provide wheelchair accessible buses in customer timetables and through Transport Infoline 131500.

Community Language (NESB) Communications

To further improve the delivery of State Transit's communications to groups from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) we consider the individual cultural influences of various groups in the community. TfNSW (Marketing Division) is now responsible for the overall direction and design of all marketing to ensure that at least 7.5% of press advertising and 3% of electronic media expenditure is allocated to community language media.

Moreover, customers of NESB may use the services of the Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) 131450 to make enquiries to 131500 Transport Info and State Transit.

Marketing the Benefits of Bus Services

TfNSW (Customer Technology and Services Division) is responsible for the overall direction of marketing the benefits of bus services.

State Transit will work jointly with TfNSW to ensure all marketing goals are met.

Marketing the benefits of public transport leads to increased patronage and better utilisation of State Transit assets. State Transit will work with TfNSW and contribute to ensure that the correct methodology is used, including but not limited to:

- Targeting groups of individuals with similar transport needs, selling the benefits of appropriate bus services to these groups of individuals with the assistance of patronage generators, such as shopping centre management, local councils, residential developers, hotel management, transport co-ordinators at universities and TAFE and human resources departments within commercial and industrial businesses;
- Distributing relevant and accurate information to patronage generator contacts for distribution to shoppers, residents, hotel patrons, students and employees. State Transit benefits greatly by being able to utilise the channels of distribution offered by patronage generators; and
- Targeting specific households within the route catchment area with relevant direct mail, particularly if there is a major change to a strategic route. Marketing concentrates on daytime trips between the peaks, evenings and

weekends, as this is usually where there is spare capacity and it is comparatively more cost effective. In the future, a bigger fleet may allow promotion of peak services.

These are ongoing activities. Each campaign will be measured to determine effectiveness in meeting patronage objectives.

It is expected that the patronage generator will take the responsibility for making the program sustainable wherever possible; by placing the information on their websites to ensure the information is kept up to date.

Ongoing Market Research

State Transit works with TfNSW to identify community needs and expectations using a variety of methodologies in addition to the specific initiatives outlined in the Customer Relations Strategy above. These are:

- Community consultation with individuals and groups such as local Members of Parliament (MPs), social planners, transport groups, senior citizens, schools, non-English speaking background (NESB) groups and disability groups;
- Analysing feedback from bus drivers;
- Informally researching the needs of the major patronage generators, such as businesses, shopping centres, universities, hospitals and major attractions; and
- Analysing customer feedback from the 131500 Feedback Line, Transport Data Centre (travel patterns of residents) and State Transit's Business Information System (patronage and revenue) data.

Marketing of Changed Bus Services

The main emphasis is communicating timely, clear and accurate information on bus service changes (new, altered or withdrawn) to targeted groups of customers.

TfNSW (Customer Technology and Services Division) is responsible for the overall direction and design of all marketing campaigns. State Transit will work jointly with TfNSW where appropriate.

Depending on the scale and importance of the service change, this may involve advertising in local press, direct mail to residents within 400 metres of a route, leaflet distribution (via brochure holders and handed out at bus stops) to customers, on-bus messages such as snap frame posters, internet and transport Info communications.

Marketing to New Residents

In Sydney, residents are continually moving around and it is important to provide them with new transport information relevant to their new surroundings. State Transit will review a number of options to reach these new residents. Australia Post offers a direct mail program to reach new residents. However, State Transit will also investigate working with local councils, residential developers and community groups.

TfNSW (Customer Technology and Services Division) is now responsible for the overall direction and design of all marketing campaigns.

Major Event Transport Marketing

State Transit partners with TfNSW, Sydney Trains and Harbour City Ferries on major event transport marketing. This facilitates an integrated communications approach, enables multi-modal transport solutions to be offered to encourage public transport use and reduce costs.

Major events such as New Year's Eve and sporting events (e.g. Super Rugby, NRL) require press-advertising supported by TfNSW and Event Organisers. Minor events can be promoted via the Internet, railway station posters and posters on board buses.

TfNSW (Customer Technology and Services Division) is now responsible for the overall direction and design of all marketing campaigns.

Adherence to the NSW Transport Customer Service Commitment

State Transit is committed to the TfNSW "Transport Customer Service Commitment Charter". The Transport Charter reaffirms our shared values and sets expectations to how we work together as one organisation to deliver better outcomes for the people of NSW. The aims are to:

- ensure that the service delivered reflects the travel needs of customers;
- operate buses with excellent safety standards for the benefit of passengers, staff, the general public and their property;
- provide bus services that meet high standards of frequency, timeliness, reliability and cleanliness;
- provide customers with complete, easily understood and up-to-date service information;
- develop a reputation for customer service through polite, courteous and helpful staff; and
- make services more accessible for all passengers.