

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question Without Notice

Tuesday, 21 February 2023

C126. Hon Tjorn Sibma to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport

I refer to current levels of patronage on the various train service lines, and ask:

1. What proportion of pre-Covid patronage is now observable on the following:
 - a. Armadale line
 - b. Fremantle line
 - c. Joondalup line
 - d. Mandurah line
 - e. Midland line?
2. To what degree has total patronage recovered against system utilisation prior to Covid, and what is the contribution of the Airport line to this recovery?

Answer

- 1-2. Transperth train patronage figures for each line are published in the Public Transport Authority's Annual Reports and on the Public Transport Authority website.

To further assist the Member, I table a media statement, *Public transport patronage bouncing back in WA*, dated 18 December 2022.





Public transport patronage bouncing back in WA

Sunday, 18 December 2022



Hon Rita Saffioti BBus MLA
Minister for Transport;
Planning; Ports

- Public transport patronage continues to climb towards pre-COVID-19 levels
- Two-zone cap and Airport Line among initiatives making public transport more attractive
- Transwa patronage also back to 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels

Western Australian commuters are flocking back to our trains, buses, and ferries, helping to lift public transport patronage numbers closer to pre-COVID-19 levels.

From the introduction of a two-zone fare cap to the opening of the Airport Line, public transport has become an appealing option for more commuters in 2022.

This has been reflected in the numbers, as patronage rebounds to about 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels when comparing recent weekly 2022 SmartRider statistics to the corresponding week in 2019.

Average weekday patronage across the network in the week ending 2 December was 295,670, roughly 89 per cent of the corresponding week in 2019, before the impacts of the pandemic began. This rose to 90 per cent in the week ending 9 December.

It's the first time since COVID-19 reached WA that a weekly comparison has shown patronage at or above 90 per cent when compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Analysis of passenger activity shows standard fares and students travelling to and from school is back above 90 per cent when compared to pre-COVID-19 levels, while the levels for those people travelling for tertiary education is at roughly 85 per cent.

Transperth patronage only dropped significantly for about a month in April 2020. Since then, WA's public transport patronage recovery has been one of the fastest and strongest in the country.

Patronage on Transwa's regional trains and road coaches have also returned to about 90 per cent of pre-COVID-19 numbers.

Despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic, Transperth continues to rank highly among passengers, with the annual Passenger Satisfaction Monitor (PSM) results released earlier this year showing more than 9 in 10 were highly satisfied with their public transport services.

In an effort to continue bolstering patronage numbers, the Government is also announcing today that free public transport will once again be available across the network after midnight on New Year's Eve.

Comments attributed to Transport Minister Rita Saffioti:

"Despite a significant drop in patronage caused by the pandemic - something experienced all over the world - it has been encouraging to see passengers haven't stayed away from public transport for very long, with numbers now back around 90 per cent of pre-COVID-19 levels.

"Clearly there are a number of factors at play including the two-zone cap keeping ticket costs at \$5 or less and the opening the Airport Line encouraging more commuters onto the network.

"The bounce back in WA public transport patronage is one of the strongest in the country, with standard fares and students travelling to and from school back above 90 per cent when compared to pre-COVID-19 levels. Those travelling to and from university is slightly lower around 85 per cent, with online learning now more common.

"We continue to work hard to make our trains, buses and ferries more attractive, environmentally friendly, and affordable for commuters, and I think the bounce back in patronage numbers shows our public transport continues to be the best in the country."

Minister's office - 6552 5500