

## RAILWAY STATION SURVEY – PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT (PPT) – JUNE 2016

### Why the Survey was done

There are many government programs where there are national standards to access the quality of the service provided and the value-for-money for taxpayers (e.g. nursing home care, or child care quality). Assessments against these standards are publicly available and regularly published. Apart from general standards for Disability access, no such standards exist for public transport facilities. In the absence of government reports, PPT has undertaken its own surveys of railway stations.

PPT previously undertook station surveys in 2003 (Gawler and Outer Harbor lines) and 2007 (Outer Harbor and Grange lines). Results from both surveys were reported in The Messenger Press.<sup>1</sup>

In 2016, The Messenger Press asked PPT to repeat the survey to report on the current state of affairs. This was agreed to and throughout June and July 2016 PPT members undertook a survey of all stations on the Outer Harbor and Grange lines as well as the Adelaide Showground (previously Keswick) and Mile End stations. A total of 27 stations were surveyed.

### The 2007 Survey

Our baseline for the 2016 survey is the 2007 survey. Previously, there had been a program of improvements at 31 stations between 2003 and 2007 with 11 lighting upgrades, 10 illuminated signs and some tactile tiles for visually impaired persons. Despite this, the 2007 survey found that:

- Stations were poorly maintained.
- Many were isolated.
- Shelters were minimal in nature – they were rudimentary and did not provide wind protection.
- Stations lacked toilet facilities.
- Graffiti was often present. Many timetables were covered with tags and unreadable, and where tags elsewhere were painted over, there was no matching to the surrounding colour.
- It was not clearly evident whether car parks at some stations were intended for commuters or private parking.

Some Government measures were still in progress:

- In particular, stations yet to meet the standards of compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, were to have upgraded ramps, and to have tactile tiles installed.
- A Maintenance team was employed to respond to graffiti and hazard removal.
- The Adopt-a-Station program was being promoted so that community groups could help maintain particular stations.

### How the 2016 Survey was scored

Five main criteria were used to assess each station:

- Appearance and Maintenance
- Security, Safety and Lighting
- Car and Bike Parking
- Disability Access
- Facilities

---

<sup>1</sup> For 2003, see [http://www.ppt.asn.au/articles/mp\\_gawlerline.html](http://www.ppt.asn.au/articles/mp_gawlerline.html) for example; and for 2007 see <http://www.ppt.asn.au/articles/StationSurveys.html>

## RAILWAY STATION SURVEY – PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT (PPT) – JUNE 2016

Each criterion was scored out of ten points, starting at a base of 5 points; points were added or deducted depending on the presence of a positive feature (eg. bike racks available) or an evident lack of amenity (eg. poor shelters). The scores for the five criteria were then averaged to give an overall result for each station.

Given that we are not professional accreditors, and two separate teams were involved, some degree of subjectivity exists in the scores. However we reached consensus on the extremities of the ranking ie. highest versus lowest score.

The table below shows the score for each station, ranked from highest to lowest:

Station	Score (out of 10)
Adelaide Showgrounds	8.20
St Clair	7.50
Woodville	6.10
Bowden	5.40
Outer Harbor	5.00
Largs	5.00
Woodville Park	4.80
Osborne	4.50
Grange	4.50
Croydon	4.40
Largs North	4.20
Glanville	4.20
North Haven	3.80
West Croydon	3.80
Peterhead	3.60
Kilkenny	3.60
Ethelton	3.50
Port Adelaide	3.50
East Grange	3.50
Cheltenham	3.40
Albert Park	3.40
Midlunga	3.20
Draper	3.20
Seaton Park	2.90
Alberton	2.60
Taperoo	2.40
Mile End	2.20
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>4.16</b>

### Link to individual station reports

The link below leads to the individual reports for each station. Photos illustrate the main areas of interest. <http://www.ppt.asn.au/articles/StationSurveys.html>

## RAILWAY STATION SURVEY – PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT (PPT) – JUNE 2016

### Commentary on the 2016 Survey Results

What we saw in 2016 showed some notable improvements in some stations, but for most stations there were many continuing concerns.

But first, what standard are we judging against? Railway stations are the point at which the many hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in rail track translate into a service. To maximise the return on this investment every station should generate many, many visitors. Apart from the intrinsic qualities of the train cars and the frequency of trains, a station that is also a destination in its own right has the best chance of being value-for-money and an effective service.

Consider the estimated cost of electrification of approx. \$320m for the Gawler line - at 25 stations this equates to \$12.8 m per station (excluding the original build of rail-track, stations, rail-cars and other ancillary services). Even if amortised over 50 years the return on capital should be in the order of \$256,000 per station per year. In comparison a decent bus stop may cost \$30,000 to build, or far less if there is no shelter at all.

Every station should generate revenue either from the station or from improvements in their surrounds and the value so gained could accrue directly to the rail system or to the community in the form of better rate revenues, or some other community asset. The process is known as *Value Capture*<sup>2</sup> and is intimately associated with the body of practice known as *Transit-Oriented-Development* (TOD).<sup>3</sup> If a station cannot achieve standards appropriate to a TOD then often it is no better value than a bus stop.

The overall score across all stations was 4.16 points. Frankly, this is not at all a positive result. One would expect that many stations would have better facilities and amenity than a bus shelter. In some cases we could confidently say that there are better bus stops than there are railway stations seen in this survey.

The station that came closest to meeting the standards of a TOD was the St Clair station, and this helped it attain the second highest score in the survey.<sup>4</sup> This is the newest station of the lot and the one that amongst other features, includes the needed adjacency to a large commercial centre and proximity to higher density housing accommodation.

### The Worst stations, but with some improvement

In the 2016 survey, we found of the worst performing stations that:

- Stations were poorly maintained.
- Many were isolated.
- Shelters were minimal in nature – they were rudimentary and did not provide wind protection.
- Stations lacked toilet facilities.

---

<sup>2</sup> Value Capture is described at <http://www.ppt.asn.au/articles/LordMayorsLightRailSummit.html>

<sup>3</sup> TOD schemes are described at the following link <http://www.ppt.asn.au/documents.html> .

<sup>4</sup> The relative lack of car-parking and the absence of bike racks saw the St Clair score fall below that of the Adelaide Showgrounds station.

## RAILWAY STATION SURVEY – PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT (PPT) – JUNE 2016

- Graffiti was often present. Many timetables were covered with tags and unreadable, and where tags elsewhere were painted over, there was no matching to the surrounding colour.
- It was not clearly evident whether car parks at some stations were intended for commuters or private parking.

If this text looks exactly like the text from the 2007 survey (above), that's because it is. For some stations, nothing changed against these particular criteria.

On certain other criteria however, the earlier program of investment on lighting and disability access has been beneficial. Uniformly, the present standard of lighting fixtures is good. As well, Disability access is clearly much improved. In some instances we have some concern that the ramps provided are perhaps too steep, or that there is some degree of disrepair; but persons in motorised wheelchairs will have relatively little difficulty negotiating most stations. It may be a bit more difficult for persons using walkers or otherwise somewhat unsteady in their footing.

### **The Most Improved Stations**

In 2007 the worst performing stations were at Cheltenham, Cheltenham racecourse, Keswick and Mile End.

In 2016, the Cheltenham stations no longer exist. In their place is the totally new St Clair station. The Keswick station was also totally rebuilt and is now the Adelaide Showgrounds station.

The two worst stations have become the two best stations – perhaps starting with a demolition is the best strategy.

### **Other observations and comments**

#### Shelters

We continue to remain concerned about the lack of shelter from the wind and rain. We placed the Mile End station into the “New Siberia” category because the persons undertaking the survey most felt the wind chill factor at this station above any other.

One station, West Croydon, displays a photo of the station building in 1915 which would have included a waiting room that provided shelter from wind, rain and sun. These facilities were better 100 years ago than those present today! Notably, both Outer Harbor and Bowden stations retain the original buildings – but regrettably these are closed to the public, with consequent loss of amenity. We fail to see why these buildings are not restored to original standards albeit with modern improvements such as security cameras and alarms, graffiti proof surfaces etc.

For those stations without any buildings we suggest that new structures be created with enclosed semi-transparent and strengthened glass and metal panels and doors. For hot weather, exhaust fans and cooling fans can be powered through solar panels and batteries.

#### Major Shopping Centres

One gets the impression that the major shopping retailers are ashamed to be associated with a railway station.

## RAILWAY STATION SURVEY – PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT (PPT) – JUNE 2016

At both the Osborne and St Clair stations there is a substantive shopping centre immediately adjacent to the station. In both instances what one sees from the station is the shopping centre's loading bay or the rear of the building, and to access the centre from the station you are required to walk a couple of hundred metres around to the front of the complex. There is no direct access from the station to the centre or vice versa. There is no coffee shop, office or any other facility which is able to oversight the station and this adds to a degree of isolation for the station.

The Osborne station and shops are quite old but there is no excuse at St Clair where both the station and the shopping complex are brand new. In the latter case, council and/or DPTI could have insisted on direct integration of the shops with the station rather than choosing a default position of cars getting priority access. This absence of integration led to downgrading the score for the St Clair station. However, in both cases there is sufficient land to be able to put a small, integrated housing and/or shopping project which directly engages with the station.

### Small Shopping Facilities

One cannot expect every station to have a major shopping centre adjacent to it but the presence of even a couple of shops can improve amenity and security oversight. Indeed, some stations have shops or coffee houses located either immediately adjacent or in a nearby street e.g. Croydon or Woodville Park. In these cases this is a legacy of the pre-automobile era and the value capture is historic and long-term.

The actual utility for commuters in the present will vary depending on the opening hours of these shops and in the service they offer. Superficially, the best example might be considered to be the restaurant built into the old station at Bowden. However, this restaurant does not allow for commuters to top up their metro pass, buy a newspaper, or a packet of tissues, or strictly speaking to use the toilet facilities.

Regrettably, there is a total lack of any facility whatsoever at most stations.

In the 2007 survey, we noted that the kiosk at the Woodville station was temporarily closed while Trans Adelaide looked for a new tenant. In 2016, this kiosk remains closed and we suspect that no tenant was ever found in those nine years.

### Station Attractiveness

Although the 2007 survey noted the government's intentions to continue with the Adopt-a-Station initiative, the 2016 survey shows that there has been relatively little success with this process.

A notable exception is the art and garden care seen at Kilkenny station, courtesy of the Hindmarsh Greening<sup>5</sup> organisation. We understand that the government hopes to source funds for further work of this nature and wish them every success. The Croydon station was bounded by an attractive children's playground which included some public art, whilst the RSL building adjacent to the Largs North featured a good mural. Murals and public art was also present at the Outer Harbor station.

---

<sup>5</sup> See Hindmarsh Greening at <https://www.facebook.com/hindmarsh.greening.7/>

## RAILWAY STATION SURVEY – PEOPLE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT (PPT) – JUNE 2016

However the ugliest station we saw, at Taperoo, requires a new shelter altogether and this can only be rectified by government.

### Opportunities for Transit Oriented Development

Lastly, given that we hold stations to the standard required of TOD's, it would be remiss not to suggest where opportunities exist to undertake such projects, particularly at two stations:

- The Adelaide Showgrounds station is already adjacent to a major community facility as well as to some offices. It has been suggested in the past that the adjacent army barracks may be returned to general use. If so, the area and number of buildings involved would readily lend themselves to a substantial development for mixed housing, commercial and community use.
- The Kilkenny station is surrounded by several derelict industrial buildings and much vacant land, and to that extent is strikingly similar to the surrounds of the Bowden station before the current "Life More Interesting" urban re-generation project commenced.

A project of a similar nature, albeit with hundreds rather than thousands of new residents, could be undertaken at Kilkenny. It is not known whether this land is contaminated, or what other measures are needed to be undertaken, but it otherwise appears to be well suited for improvement.