



GAWLER YOUTH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Youth Transport Accessibility Report

2021

In October 2020 a Special Meeting of the Gawler Youth Advisory Committee (GYAC) was called to establish a sub-committee, for the purpose of addressing growing transport concerns held by young people in the community.

In October 2020 a Special Meeting of the Gawler Youth Advisory Committee (GYAC) was called to address growing transport concerns held by young people in the community. At this meeting the GYAC resolved to created a sub-committee for the purpose of "investigating the effects of recent changes to State Government transport policy made and clearly identify the impact it is having on young people through public consultation".

At the first meeting of the new Youth Accessibility to Transport Committee (YTAC) members resolved that the best way forward was to develop a Youth Transport Survey which could be distributed through a variety of media to members of the community.

This report conveys the results of the YTAC's community consultation in a format suitable for presentation to elected members and other community and government stakeholders.

The final report contains an analysis of collated survey results from 140 young people living in and around the Town of Gawler, information obtained via Freedom of Information (FOI) request by the Committee Chairperson and other publicly available information.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

"It's not just about getting from point A to B, it's about affording young people the ability to access Quality education, meaningful employment and much needed healthcare services."

- Isaac Solomon (*The Bunyip*, May 26 2021)

This report is An authentic, sincere and mission-driven statement from the chair, CEO or president signals commitment and sets the tone for the rest of the report. It can include an overview of the vision, direction and strategy the organization is committed to take, to help move the needle on the SDGs to meet the global 2030 deadline.

This message demonstrates the organization's understanding of its impact and responsibility to people and the planet. Importantly, it also builds the audience's trust and confidence in the organization.



”

Unfortunately
it's not an issue
we can ignore
anymore.

THE MAJOR ISSUES

There are currently 5 major transport accessibility issues which have been brought to the attention of the GYAC over the past two years. The YTAC used to these issues to form the scope of the committee's consultation. The major issues are as follows:

- 01 Cancellation of Vehicle On Road Testing (VORT)**

In July of 2019 it was announced that the State Government had decided to close the Gawler VORT route giving a number of reasons strongly rejected by driving instructors, the GYAC and Town of Gawler Council.
- 02 Wait Times for Hazard Perception Testing (HPT)**

At the time the YTAC was established in October 2020, wait times for a Hazard Perception Testing appointment at Service SA were in excess of 4 weeks (1 month).
- 03 Ongoing Access to Bus Services in the Town**

Ongoing certainty around the future of the Gawler Bus Routes was called into question in mid 2020 after the State Government announced cuts to all of Gawler's bus routes.
- 04 Closure of the Railway Line/Substitute Bus Services**

After the decision was made to close the Gawler Railway line to allow for electrification works to take place, a number of substitute bus services were provided by the State Government garnering extensive criticism from the community.
- 05 Privatisation of the Train Service**

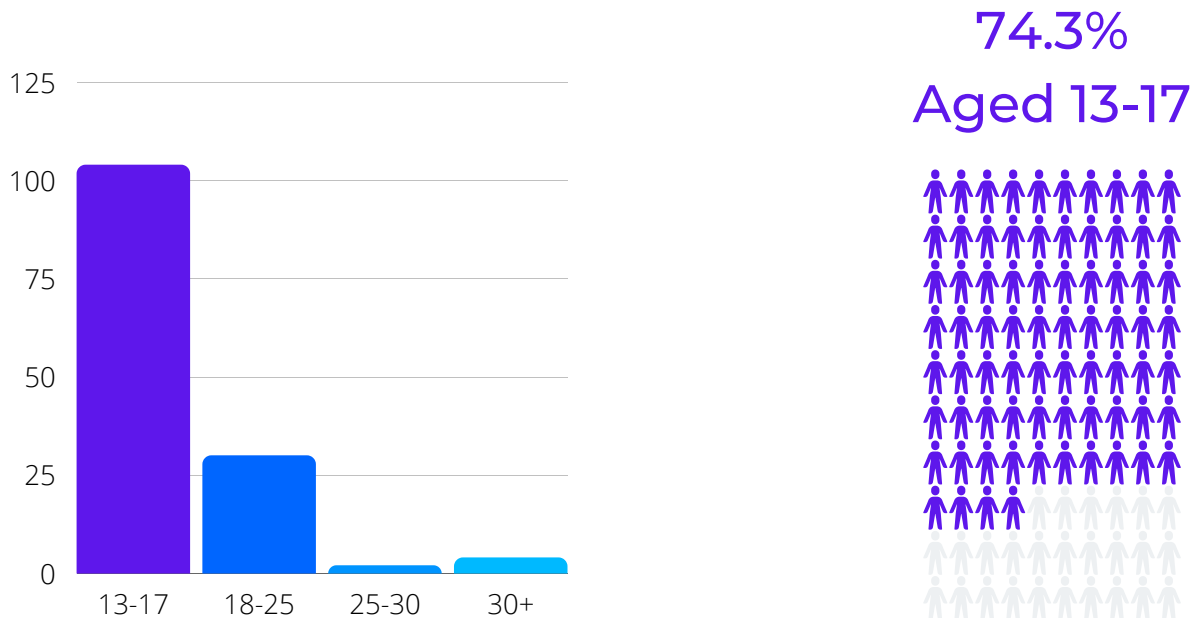
To help give your audience an overview, this section can include a brief description of the goal, its relevance to your sector or industry, and the specific sub-targets your organization is addressing.

Question 1

What is your age? (140 Responses)

Age

The vast majority of people who completed the survey were aged between 13-17, with only 6 people over the age of 25.



Question 2

Which suburb are you from? (111 Responses)

Young people who took part in our survey came from a range of areas including:

Blakeview
Evanston
Evanston Park
Evanston Gardens
Gawler
Gawler Belt
Gawler East
Gawler South

Golden Grove
Hamley Bridge
Hewett
Hillbank
Kalbeeba
Kersbrook
Kudla
Lewiston

Manningham
Mawson Lakes
Munno Para
Munno Para West
Para Hills West
Reeves Plains
Salisbury
Smithfield

Tanunda
Two Wells
Uleybury
Virginia
Willaston

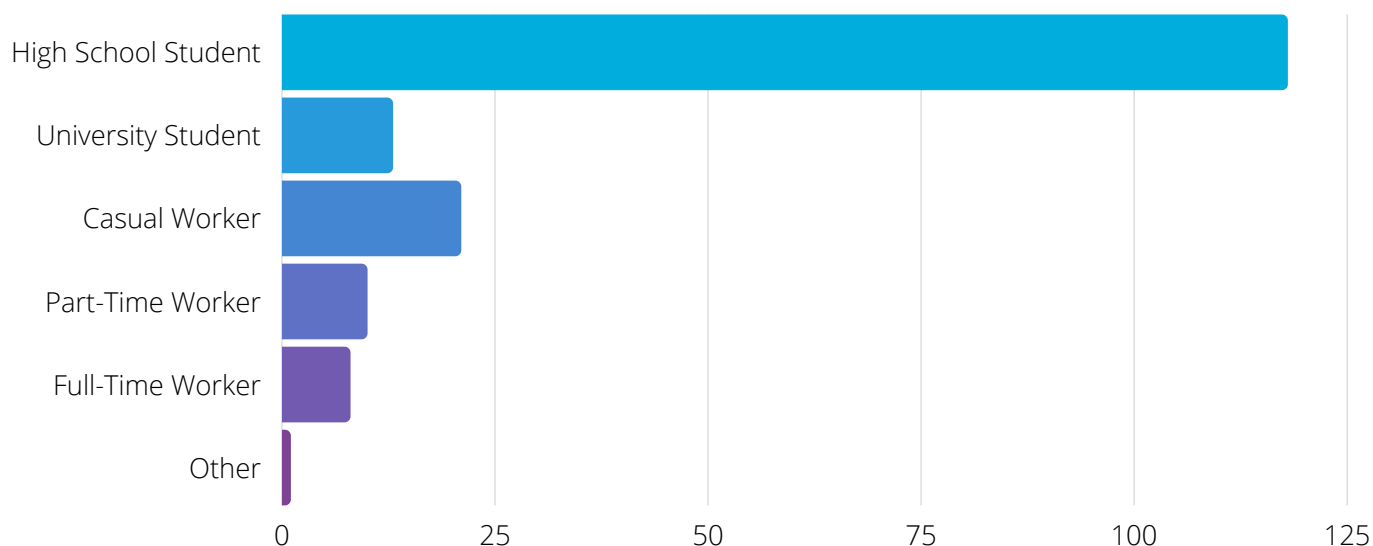
People came from a range of areas in and around the Gawler railway line. The vast majority of respondents were from the Town of Gawler but numbers have not been disclosed for privacy purposes.

Question 3

What best describes your current study/work habits? (140 Responses)

Work/Study Habits

The vast majority of people who completed the survey were high school students likely due to the collaboration with local schools.

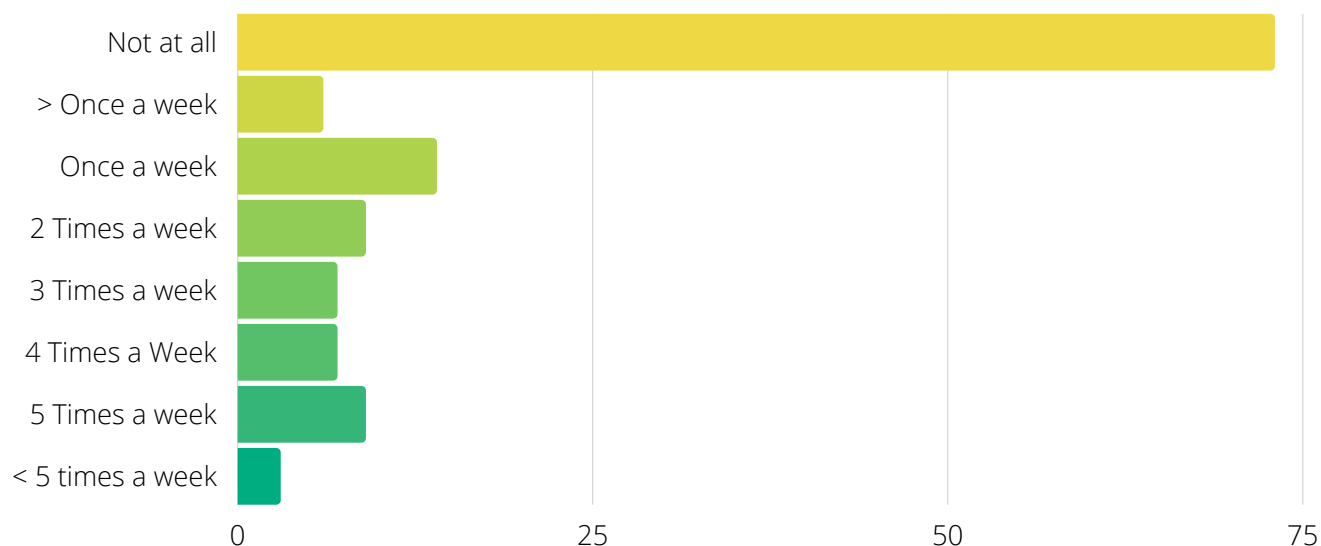


Question 4

On average, how many times per week do you use Adelaide Metro Services (prior to the railway electrification works)? (128 Responses)

Travel Frequency

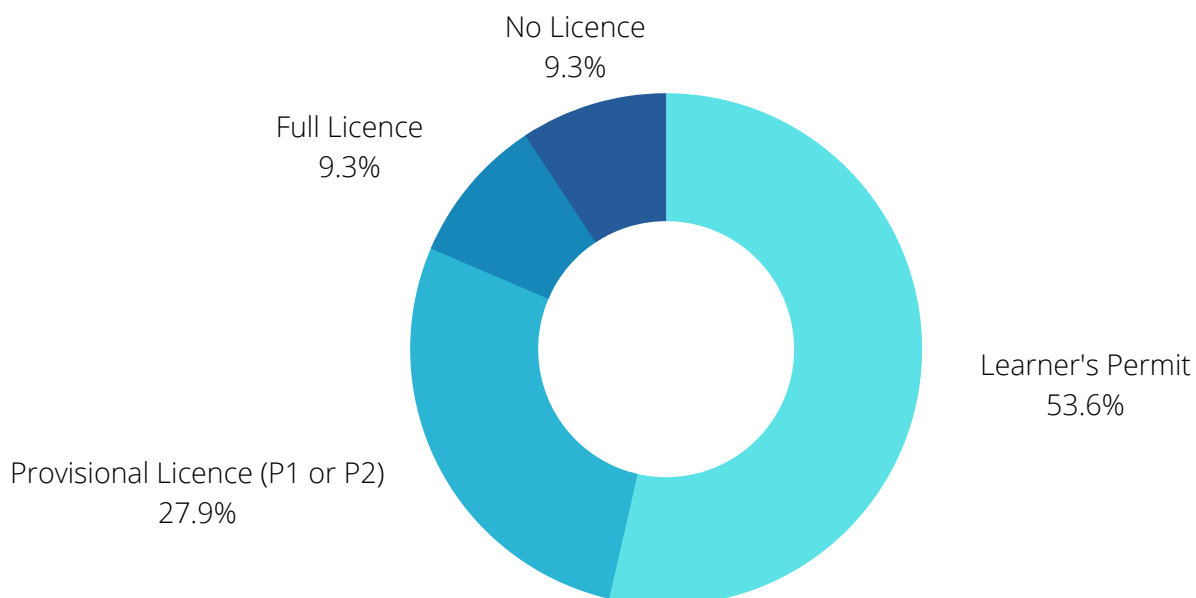
The vast majority of people who completed the survey were high school students likely due to the collaboration with local schools. 29 (40%) people who do not catch public transport have a full or provisional licence.



Question 5

What class of drivers licence do you currently hold? (140 Responses)

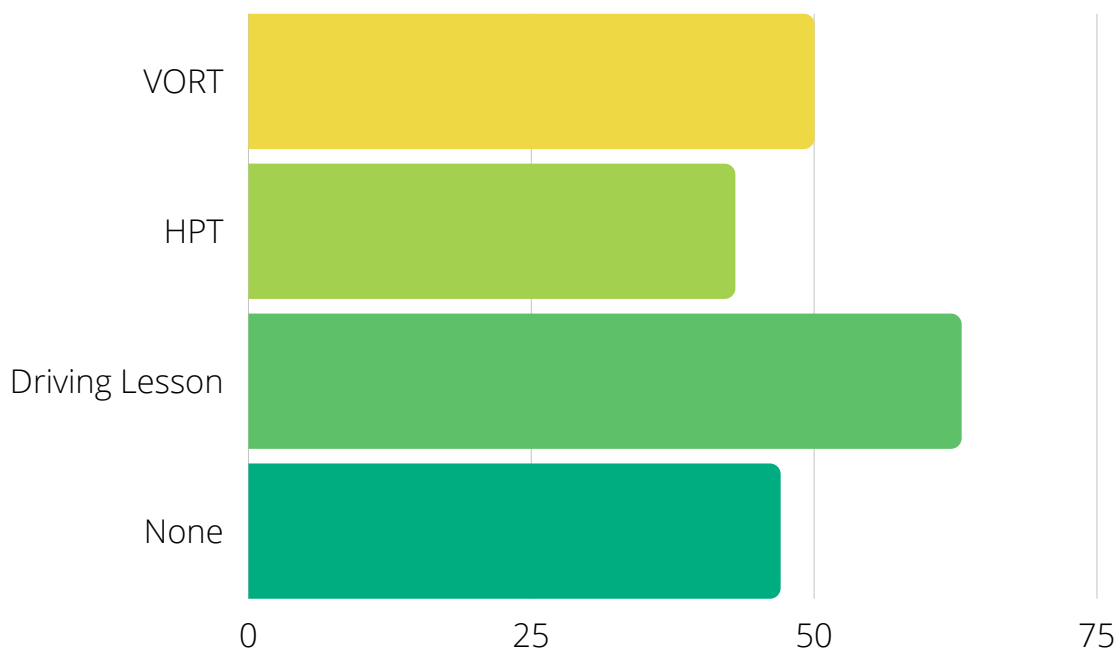
Licence Status



Question 6

Have you undertaken driving lessons, Whicle on Road Test (VORT) or Hazard Perception Testing (HPT)? (125 Responses)

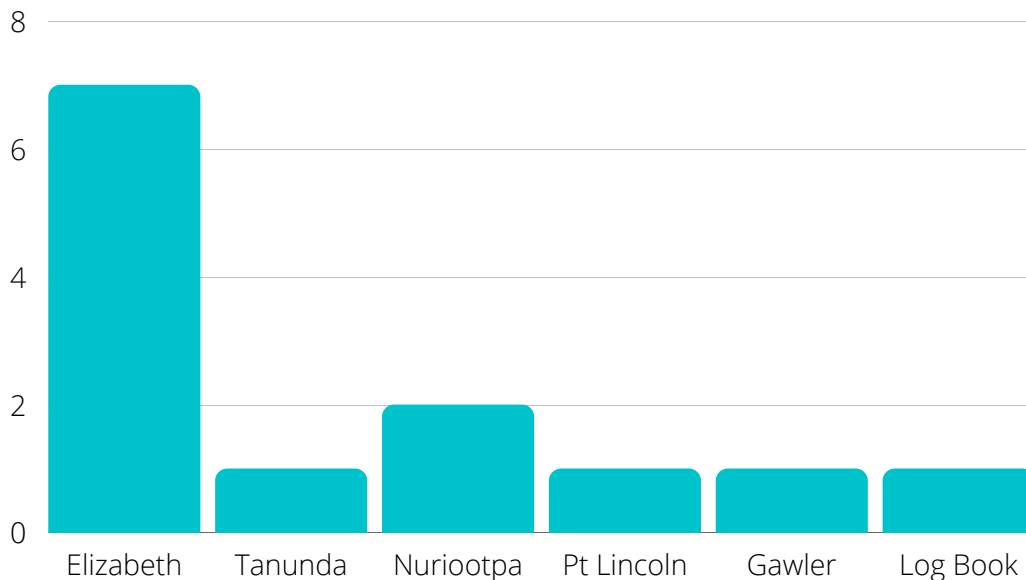
Driving Experience



Question 7

Which VORT location did you select to complete your test? (13 Responses) - A technical error occurred with this question resulting in a low response rate

VORT Location

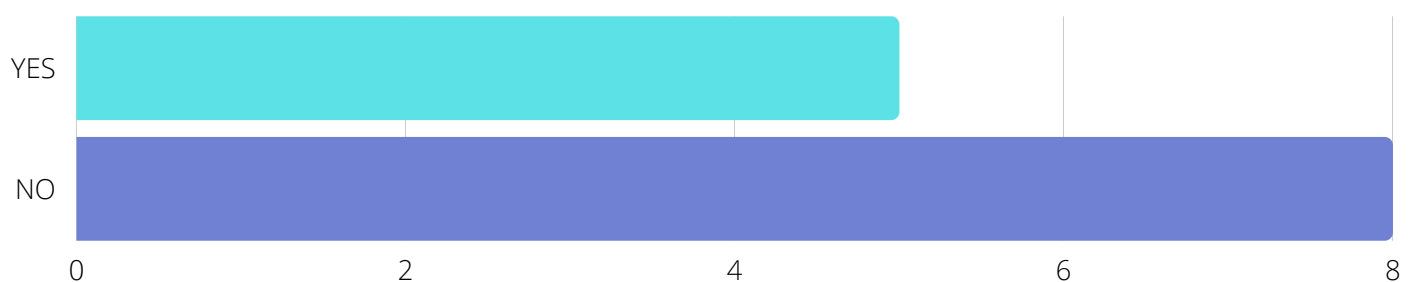


Question 8

Are you aware of the Government's decision to cancel VORT testing in Gawler? (13 Responses)

VORT Cancellation Awareness

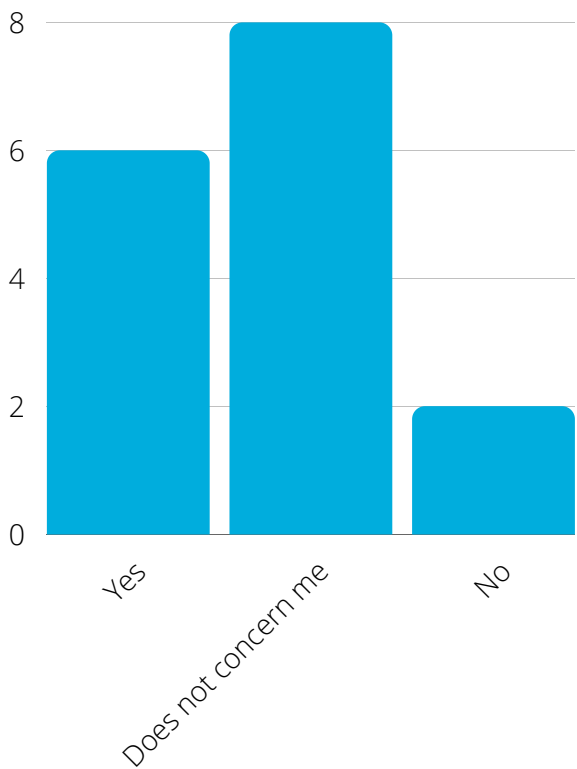
8 out of 13 respondents to this question did not know that VORT Testing had been cancelled in the Town of Gawler. This information is skewed due to a technical error preventing this question from appearing on the survey.



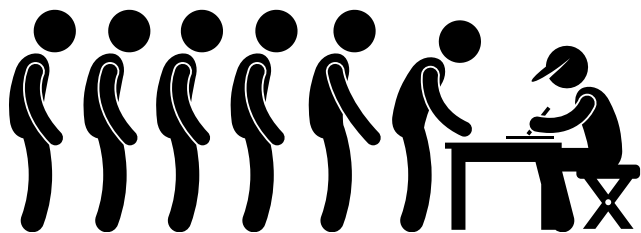
Question 9

Would you like to see VORT testing return to Gawler?

Return of VORT



547 Xavier Students signed a petition to bring back VORT Testing in Gawler

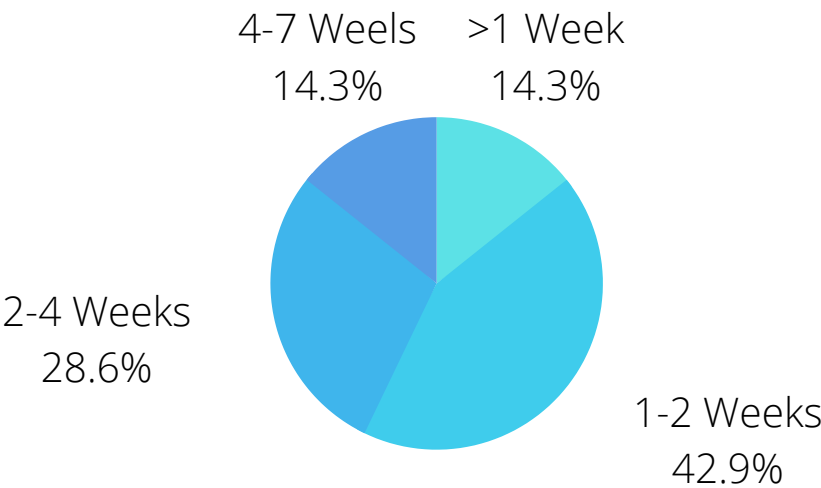


Question 10

If you have sat the Hazard Perception Test in the last 24 months, how long did you have to wait for an appointment? (10 Responses)

HPT Waiting Times

The wait for hazard perception testing has decreased greatly since October 2020.

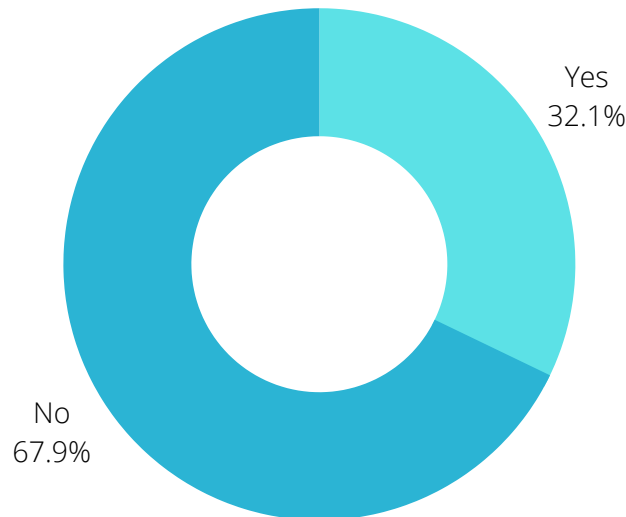


Question 11

Do you usually catch the train? (140 Responses)

Train Use

Train use is extremely lower than it could be amongst respondents but is vital to those who do use the service it.



Question 12

If yes, why do you catch the train? (58 Responses)

Reason for Train Use

Some Train users choose to use the train for environmental purposes while for others it is a means of affordable travel. To some of the respondents it is necessary to catch this service given they have no other means of Transport. People use the train to access shops, sports, education, recreational activities and to catch up with friends and family. Some people choose to catch the train because it is fast, convenient and good for the environment, while for others it is their only transport option. Some recurring answers have been given below:

"Shopping"

"Work, school, outings"

"Educational purposes"

"It's quick and better for the environment"

"Cheaper and convenient"

"To watch cricket"

"To get into University"

"To save travel time"

"Recreation"

"[To] get myself out the house"

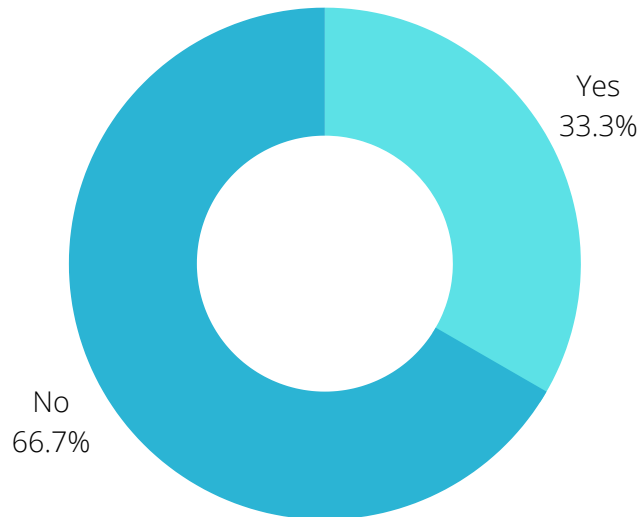
"cost effective... and convinient..."

Question 13

Are you aware of the Government's plan to privatise the train service? (138 Responses)

Privatisation Awareness

Almost 1/3 of people are aware of the State Government's plan to privatise the train service.



Question 14

Do you have any comments on the privitisation of the train service? (71 Responses)

Thoughts on Privatisation

The majority of train users voiced objection to privitisation. One respondent was hopeful that the service might improve if regulation properly but the vast majority of responses detailed dissatisfaction with the change with a few respondents providing personal experience with privatisation in the eastern States and the UK. Another respondent voiced their approval given that it would save taxpayer's money. We now know that according to inDaily the cost of the private contract is in excess of \$2.14 billion.[Ref 1] Some of the responses are provided on the next page:

Thoughts on Privatisation

"Bad since it should be a public service"

"Dumb"

"I am disappointed, and worry about the quality of the service"

"Just don't make it disadvantage the outer community"

"Probably not the best idea"

"Disgraceful"

"not again!"

"make it safer"

"should not be done. All costs WILL rise!"

"another devastating blow to our already suffering train service; to come back from 2-year long line closures only to find increased prices and privatised service would be detrimental to commuters"

"I think it is a good idea as it will avoid our state government wasting taxpayers money"

"The privatisation disgusts me and it will fail"

"Don't up the price please"

"I think it's a sloppy way to save money. Poor decision making"

It's a joke. Privatization of public transport clearly has not worked in the eastern States. Especially with the ridiculous amount of toll booths on highways and the joke that is the Sydney Light Rail which is slower than the bus route."

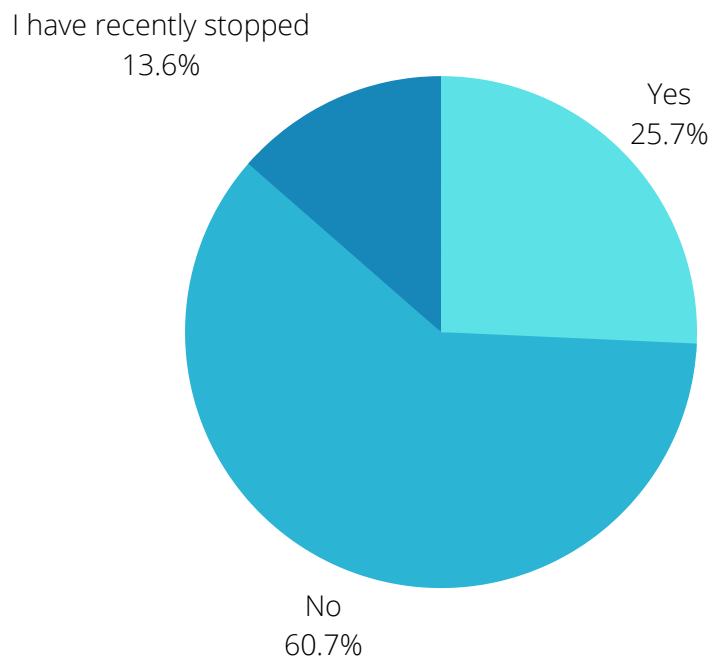
"I've had experience of train privatisation in England, spoilt an excellent, low fare service. There are already problems now that it's been privatised - they are bringing workers in from interstate to do the jobs that SA Government employees refused to do, due to a very bad handover between KD and SA Government. The Government is also paying for these interstate workers to be here - all because some MP decided to privatise the railways."

Question 15

Are you using the substitute bus service while the train services are suspended? (140 Responses)

Substitute Service Use

13.6% of people have stopped catching the Gawler Line now that it is a substitute bus service while those who are required to catch it have voiced increasing confusion and dissatisfaction.



Question 16

If yes, how are you finding the substitute bus service? If no, what is the reason you haven't been using the substitute bus service? Or, why did you stop catching the substitute bus service? (69 Responses)

Thoughts on the Substitute Service

A high number of people who answered the next two questions of the survey voiced their frustration at how long the service takes to reach its destination, the lack of express services and confusion they face attempting to access the service. A few more disturbing responses detail extreme discomfort, anxiety and inconsistency in payment for use of the service.

Thoughts on Privatisation

"Me or my parents can drive"

"Very terrible. It's confusing knowing where to go & what bus goes where & not[,] it takes so much longer"

"Takes so long"

The schedule was too erratic as the buses were often late or left early making it hard to plan what bus to catch"

"They are late a lot"

"I haven't been catching because it's longer and it just doesn't seem the same as a train"

"Extremely slow"

"okay but doesn't compare to the trains not as convenient"

"It's inconvenient because it takes so much longer"

"It's very bad, I really miss the convenience and speed of the train, especially when the express buses insisted on going along main north road rather than the expressway"

"The substitute buses have been very average. they generally come on time but the fact that it now takes me around 2 hours to get from my house to my university (each way!) is an absolutely shocking failure of our transport services to provide for northern suburbs residents."

"The GA4 is good but there's so many people who are trying to do the same thing. Some people have been turned away and have to wait for the next next service which can take an hour. I get really anxious catching the substitute bus because there's so many people who push their way in to get a seat. It's chaos."

"It's so bad, it takes an hour to get just to mawson lakes let alone the city"

"Its fine. But so uncomfortable. Those buses shake around on any (and every) road from here to the city. Especially on the expressway. They also take waaaay longer, even with the express line. I have to get up 2 hours earlier than I need to, just to make sure I factor in the 1hr 20min ride."

"The whole point of using the train is to keep off the congested roads. I have had buses break down which has made me late for work, so am now relying on my car."

"It isn't a bad service, however I have been caught out where I am stuck on the bus for 2 hours and am late to class because of it!"

Question 17

Have you had any experiences (positive or negative) with the train or substitute bus service that you would like to share with us? (57 Responses)

"Poor service"

"They take forever"

"People don't always pay"

"Witnessed a fight"

"people have fights on them"

"My substitute bus rear ended a car and took another 15 minutes to get another bus to take me to the city. The traffic that this bus travels on doesn't help me get to places on time."

"Love trains"

"Lots of yelling"

"I've had points where busses have been extremely early or extremely late where straight u[p] busses have not appeared. I've had points where drivers have started driving before people can sit and had a specific situation where an older woman with impaired mobility walking on the bus fell because the driver started driving before she could get to a seat"

"Extremely poor behaviour by train users. Inappropriate language in particular"

"I have had a bus get lost trying to find the route to the expressway and was considerably delayed"

"On a long day after uni, riding on a shaky, bumpy bus is so infuriating. I know it's not anyone's fault, so I just suffer quietly"

"Bus broke down and had to switch buses during a trip"

"takes almost double the time so now i just drive and spend money on fuel and parking"

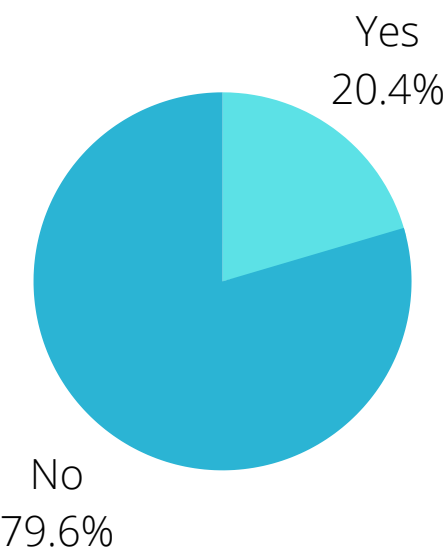
"Not a whole lot but no good experiences, just what you expect from it really"

Question 18

Do you rely on the local bus service? (137 Responses)

Local Bus Services

It is important to note that young people are not the main demographic for local bus services but a high number of people who use the trains also use the bus services.

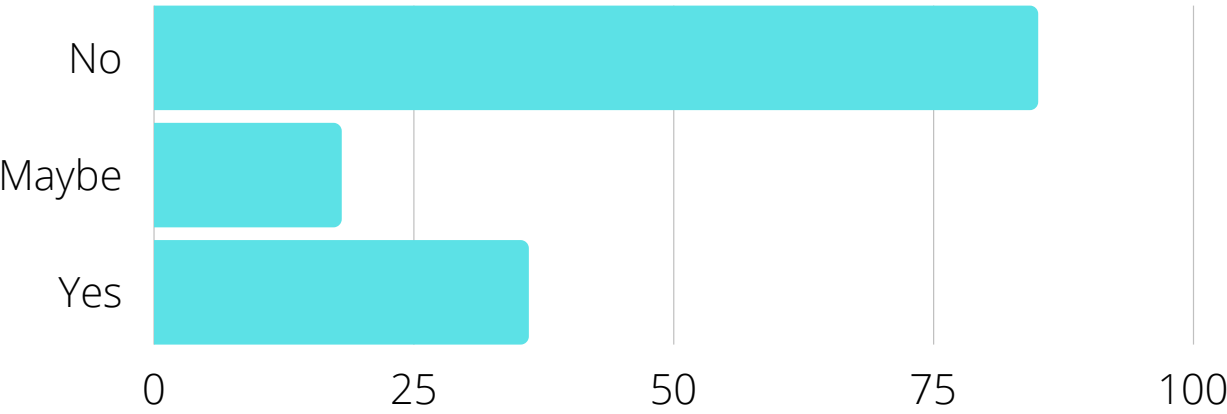


Question 19

Are you aware of the Gawler On Demand Bus (the 495)? (139 Responses)

On Demand Bus Awareness

The number of people aware of the Gawler On Demand Bus service could be greatly improved and solve some issues with lack of transport.



Question 20

Have you had any experiences (positive or negative) with the buses that you would like to share? (46 Responses)

Thoughts on the Bus Service

There weren't a lot of responses other than "No" to this part but the people who do use the service emphasized how important it is to them.

"Negative - the bus driver didn't even know where he was going to drive & told me the bus didn't stop at my stop, when it actually did & I missed the bus home from work & had to wait 45+ minutes"

"Harassment"

"I often call up and are told that I am unable to book even though I often see it [the on demand bus] driving around empty more often than not."

"People stop yelling"

"Gum on seat and ground, sticky seats and ground"

"Only positive"

"The 491 bus is the saddest little bus route in the metro system - it comes once an hour to my suburb (hewett), can't get me home from work when i finish later than 7pm (as the bus stops running), and doesn't even run during the weekend! I'd really strongly advocate for even 2 buses an hour to run the route, it would greatly improve transport options to hewett residents."

"A bus is a service that you can pull over at all times. Not on a phone call only!"

"Was confusing to request the bus"

Question 21

Are there currently any other Transport issues or topics you would like to share? (44 Responses)

Other Transport Issues

Respondents used this question to reiterate some of the other issues mentioned in previous questions and add further details.

"Aggressive behaviours"

"Privatisation, don't do it"

*"I see lots of buses circulating around gawler with no passengers
Why:?"*

"More GA4 services would be amazing :)"

"Just that some of the substitute buses don't have ticket machines so it's a bit of a mixed signal whether we are supposed to still tap our cards or not. At the very beginning we were told to not worry but now it's encouraged. So I don't know, depends on who's driving honestly."

"A bus is a service that you should be able to pull over ! Not one by a phone call."

"No - just having a decent train service would be great"

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the report gives a brief analysis of the Committee's findings, gives a desirable outcome and recommends steps towards achieving this.

01

Cancellation of Vehicle On Road Testing (VORT)

In July of 2019 it was announced that the State Government had decided to close the Gawler VORT route giving a number of reasons strongly rejected by driving instructors, the GYAC and Town of Gawler Council.

Analysis

While the quality of the data in the VORT testing section of the survey suffered due to the technical error not allowing people to answer the question, it is important to emphasise the wide community support for the reinstatement of VORT testing. 547 students from a single school supporting the reintroduction of VORT testing in the Town of Gawler provides undeniable evidence that the community supports having VORT testing here in Gawler.[Ref 2] The claims levelled against the Gawler VORT testing route by former Minister Stephan Knoll have been resoundingly rejected by the Gawler Youth Advisory Committee and community stakeholders.[Ref 3]

Recommendation 1.1

VORT testing be reinstated in the Town of Gawler. A meeting further meeting with the new Minister Corey Wingard should be set up to discuss further the community's discontent with inaction on this matter.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

02

Wait Times for Hazard Perception Testing (HPT)

At the time the YTAC was established in October 2020, wait times for a Hazard Perception Testing appointment at Service SA were in excess of 4 weeks (1 month).

Analysis

Since the time when the Youth Transport Accessibility Committee was established the waiting time for Hazard Perception Testing in Gawler has greatly decreased. After the first outbreak of Covid-19 in South Australia occurred in March 2020 some Hazard Perception Tests were waived by Service SA. Making people wait in excess of six weeks to sit a test is undesirable not just because of the inconvenience it causes but because of safety concerns. While you can book the HPT in advance a lot of young people book it after they have completed their VORT test. This means that some young people are off the road for, in some cases, almost 2 months while they wait for their Provisional Licence. This is especially amongst those who have struggled to complete their driving hours and those who have sought extra assistance to get their hours up through programs like Gawler Light Rotary's "Wheels in Motion" program.

[Ref 5]

Recommendation 2.1

In the event that testing times do go up again due to appointment backlog (for reasons including Covid-19 restrictions) an investigation should be done into available alternatives. Offsite testing or testing waivers are in our view both viable options worth exploration. The Minister should be notified of this in any transport meeting which can be arranged.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

03

Ongoing Access to Bus Services in the Town

Ongoing certainty around the future of the Gawler Bus Routes was called into question in mid 2020 after the State Government announced cuts to all of Gawler's bus routes.

Analysis

The State Government decision to reverse the cuts to bus routes in the Town of Gawler has afforded some security to bus users for the time-being. [Ref 6] It is obvious from the survey that there is still a lack of knowledge within the community about the Gawler on Demand bus service but also that this service is not suitable for everyone and some people prefer the regular scheduled bus services. It is important to note that school aged children are not a demographic who frequent bus services in off-peak times and this should be taken into account when looking at the results of the survey.

Recommendation 3.1

Further research should be conducted into bus services available for those working late shifts or attending co-curricular activities after school where the survey has eluded to a demand for such services at times where the buses are not currently scheduled. This feedback should be given to the Minister in transport related meeting.

Recommendation 3.2

DPTI and local leaders should be encouraged to promote the Gawler on Demand service to young people in the community who may benefit from the service but at present do not know it exists.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

04

Closure of the Railway Line/Substitute Bus Services

After the decision was made to close the Gawler Railway line to allow for electrification works to take place, a number of substitute bus services were provided by the State Government garnering extensive criticism from the community.

Analysis

The Gawler railway line has been closed for electrification works for some time now. Questions around the Substitute bus service have shown a high level of discontent within the community about the service and how it is run. The inconsistency in payment for the service based on whether an Adelaide Metro bus or privately owned bus arrives at the stop is alarming. Lack of personal space (especially during covid), high and inconsistent travel times and unclear information have all contributed to the community's dissatisfaction with the service. Some members of the community have ceased to catch the service while others who require the service have made scathing remarks about it.

Recommendation 4.1

DPTI and the Minister for Transport should be made aware of the inconsistency in payment for use of the service and subsequently develop a scheme which allows for uniform payment options. If it is not possible to use metrocard payment on a privately owned bus the service should be made free for those who travel on the Adelaide Metro buses.

Recommendation 4.2

More GA4(Express) buses should be added during peak times. The Minister should be made aware that people are being turned away from the service due to overcrowding.

Recommendation 4.3

The Minister should be made aware of all other issues raised in the survey including anti-social behaviour. The Minister should be asked if bus drivers are given a time limit to reach their destination this should be discussed in-depth along with alternative methods for decreasing travel time that do not result in safety concerns for the driver and passengers.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

05

Privatisation of the Train Service

To help give your audience an overview, this section can include a brief description of the goal, its relevance to your sector or industry, and the specific sub-targets your organization is addressing.

Analysis

The vast majority of respondents to the survey and are objected to privatisation of the train service. While some are hopeful it will lower costs this has been shown not to be a reality. [Ref 1]

Recommendation 5.1

In any subsequent interactions with the Minister and DPTI, whether they be by letter or when meeting in person, Council and the GYAC should continue to emphasise the community's disapproval with the decision to privatise the train service. The concerns about higher costs and safety associated with privatisation should also be raised with the Minister to help mitigate any negative impacts of privatisation.

CONCLUSION

The Gawler Youth Advisory Committee is proud of the response rate to a community consultation run solely by members of the YTAC who have volunteered their time and effort to make it possible. Given the findings of the report the GYAC will continue to advocate on behalf of Young people who have transport accessibility concerns. As stated in the Bunyip on 26 May 2021, "it really is a sorry state of affairs when there are flights from Adelaide to Sydney which are quicker than buses from Adelaide to Gawler." [Ref 4]

It really is not just about getting from point A to B, it's about affording young people the ability to access Quality education, meaningful employment and much needed healthcare services. The people of Gawler deserve better.

REFERENCES

[1] <https://indaily.com.au/news/2020/10/06/labor-blows-whistle-on-transport-ministers-train-privatisation-costs/>

[2] Parliamentary Debates, Tony Piccolo MP, 11 September 2019, available at: <http://hansardpublic.parliament.sa.gov.au/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-11-35347>

[3] <https://bunyippress.com.au/driver-testing-axe-to-be-reversed/>

[4] <https://bunyippress.com.au/youth-take-traffic-matters-into-own-hands/>

[5] Freedom of Information Document, Annexure 1

[6] <https://indaily.com.au/news/2020/06/29/breaking-state-government-dumps-bus-route-changes-and-service-sa-cuts/>

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