

SUNSHINE COAST PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

The following information outlines the impact of the funding investment in terms of outcomes and performance for a range of initiatives. While the majority of measures are quantitative, information on qualitative measures are included where available.

It is important to refer to any notes listed as they attempt to set any relevant context that may be important to assist in interpreting the information.

Public Transport Travel Characteristics on the Sunshine Coast

The following information provides a snapshot of the use of public transport on the Sunshine Coast. It will assist in setting a base of information for comparison purposes and from which trends may be identified.

The data presented for the Sunshine Coast is based on officer analysis of available data. Agencies such as the Department of Transport and Main Roads and TransLink have provided assistance as requested in interpreting gathered data during analysis. However, it should be treated as indicative data and not 'official' data for the Sunshine Coast (unless specifically referenced) as it has not been subject to rigorous data cleansing and cross checking with other sources.

From the TransLink Transit Authority Annual Report 2010-2011 the following Sunshine Coast information is relevant. The State government invested about \$32 million in 2010/11 to run the Sunbus services on the Sunshine Coast on 27 routes for 5,967 services per week.

The following data attempts to provide a guide to public transport travel characteristics for the Sunshine Coast.

- About 3.8 million trips occurred on the Sunbus bus services in 2010/11. It should be recognised that during this period travel by public transport was significantly impacted by external factors such as no or restricted bus services due to weather events (flooding) and industrial action, no recording of use during the SEQ wide flood related free travel period in Jan 2011 and fare increases.
- Broadly speaking slightly more public transport travel occurs across the months of July to December compared with January to June.
- For the TransLink bus network on the Sunshine Coast approximately 65 to 70% of trips are made using 'go card' which is below the stated SEQ figure of 80%.
- Between March 2011 and April 2012 there was a 1.6% increase in the number of daily services resulting in a 2.7% increase in the total daily service kilometres.
- Public transport user groups are typically
 - For TransLink bus network
 - approximately 25 to 30% Adult,
 - About 5% Child, and
 - about 65 to 70% senior and concession travellers. (Concession includes Seniors, Pensioners, Defence Force Veterans, Tertiary Students and Secondary School Students.)
 - For the *qconnect* service (Beerwah to Landsborough to Maleny)
 - approximately 25% Adult,
 - About 5 to 10% Child, and
 - about 65 to 70% senior and concession travellers of which secondary students would appear to be the majority. (Concession includes Seniors, Pensioners, Defence Force Veterans, Tertiary Students and Secondary School Students.)

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- The TransLink contract service area on the Sunshine Coast (mid 2010 Sunbus bus services) reached approximately 202,000 people (proportional population of zones from 2006 Census within 400m of bus route)
- The 2006 Journey to Work data from the Census identifies that 4,137 out of 94,370 trips were destined for Brisbane (i.e. ~4%) and 1,769 were destined for Caboolture area, (~ 2%)

The QR Passenger Load Surveys advise the following use of the Nambour to Elimbah rail segment over time.

Peak Period travel information:-

Nambour - Elimbah	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 Q1	2009 Q3	2010 Q3	2011 Q3
AM Peak Inbound services arriving Central 0600 – 0900 (Boardings)	726	746	804	748	873	929	910	831
PM Peak Outbound services departing Central 1530 – 1830 (Alightings)	669	659	672	741	792	806	735	907

Public Transport Levy Investment Outcomes

Investment of public transport levy funds has occurred into a range of initiatives. The aim has generally been to:

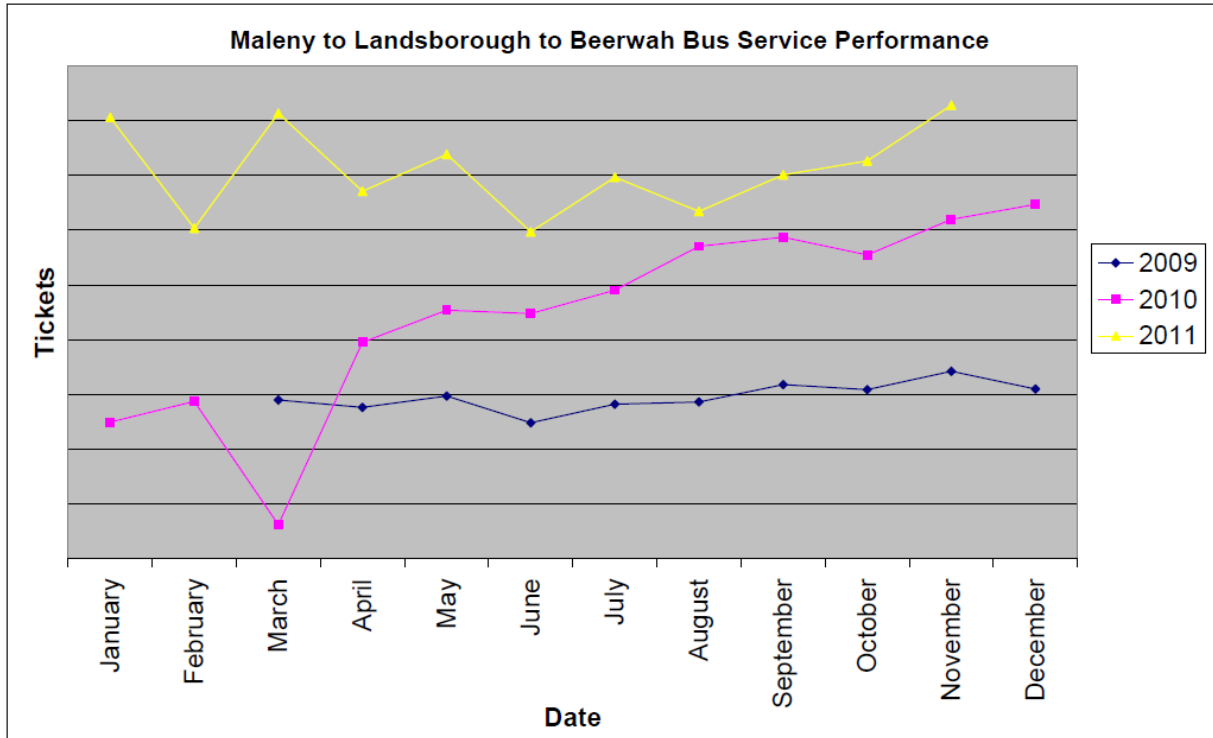
- bring forward service improvements,
- trial services to prove the demand for public transport,
- improve frequency
- expand to 7 day services
- improve efficiency
- expand the existing public transport network

The following identifies the purpose of the initiative and where possible what performance outcome was observed.

Beerwah to Landsborough to Maleny Bus Service (B2L2M)

An early approach was the identification of “easy” wins in terms of service improvement. In March 2010 the opportunity was taken to maximise an available resource and extend an existing service (Maleny-Landsborough) to connect with the growing and designated major activity centre of Beerwah. It was also extended to a 7 day service.

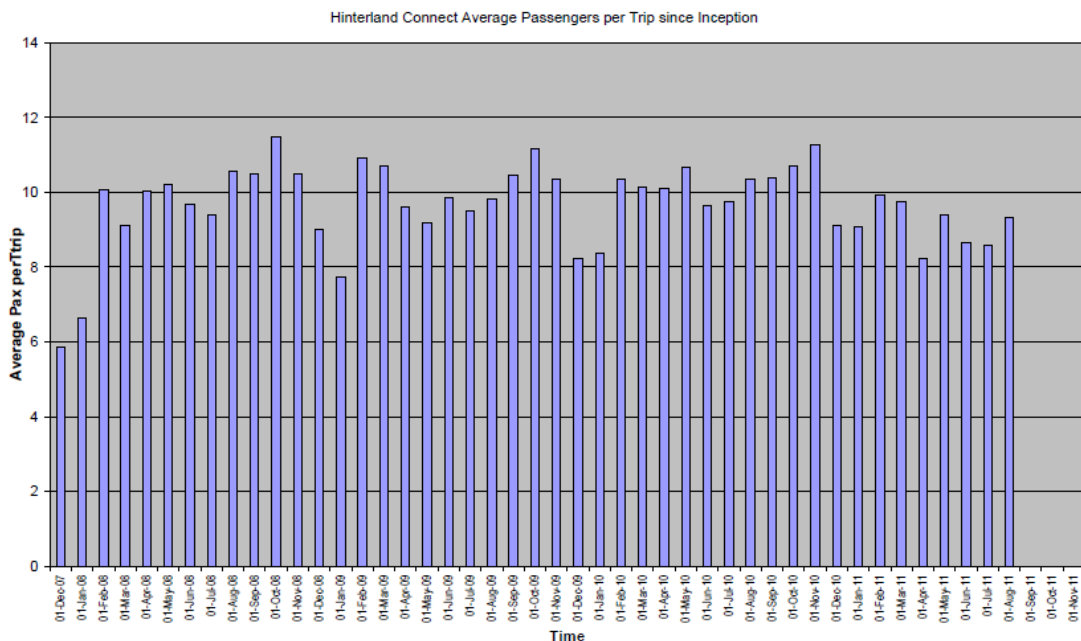
The investment in this service has seen the number of trips grow rapidly with the total number of trips double in a period of about 12 months. Trip numbers have grown further and it now fluctuates from 100% to 160% of the original number of trips. Weekends in particular have achieved a relatively high level of use. There are now about 8,000 additional trips per annum on the service.



The investment to date by Council using the Public Transport Levy can be identified as a success purely on the basis of the increase in trips. The marketing by Council and the marketing activities carried out by DTMR under the *qconnect* brand and well as the significantly improved online journey planner would also have underpinned the results of this improved service.

Hinterland Connect Bus Service between Maleny and Nambour

Investment was made into maintaining this new trial bus service since 2007 between Maleny and Nambour. It was announced in mid 2009 by the then Minister for Transport as a successful service which had met the performance target of more than 8 passengers per trip on average and reaching a 30% cost recovery. Council funding support has reduced over time to a point where it is now funded by TransLink since 1 Jan 2011.



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It is a necessary and important strategic link in the Sunshine Coast public transport network to provide centre to centre connectivity between the coast and hinterland communities.

The service is carrying between 25,000 and 30,000 passengers per annum. The past investment can be considered to have been a success.

Free Holiday Travel Initiative

This initiative is generally known as the Free Holiday Bus which usually occurs over the Christmas/New Year period for about 2 weeks, but it has grown to include the *qconnect* service, flexilink services and Council Cabs.

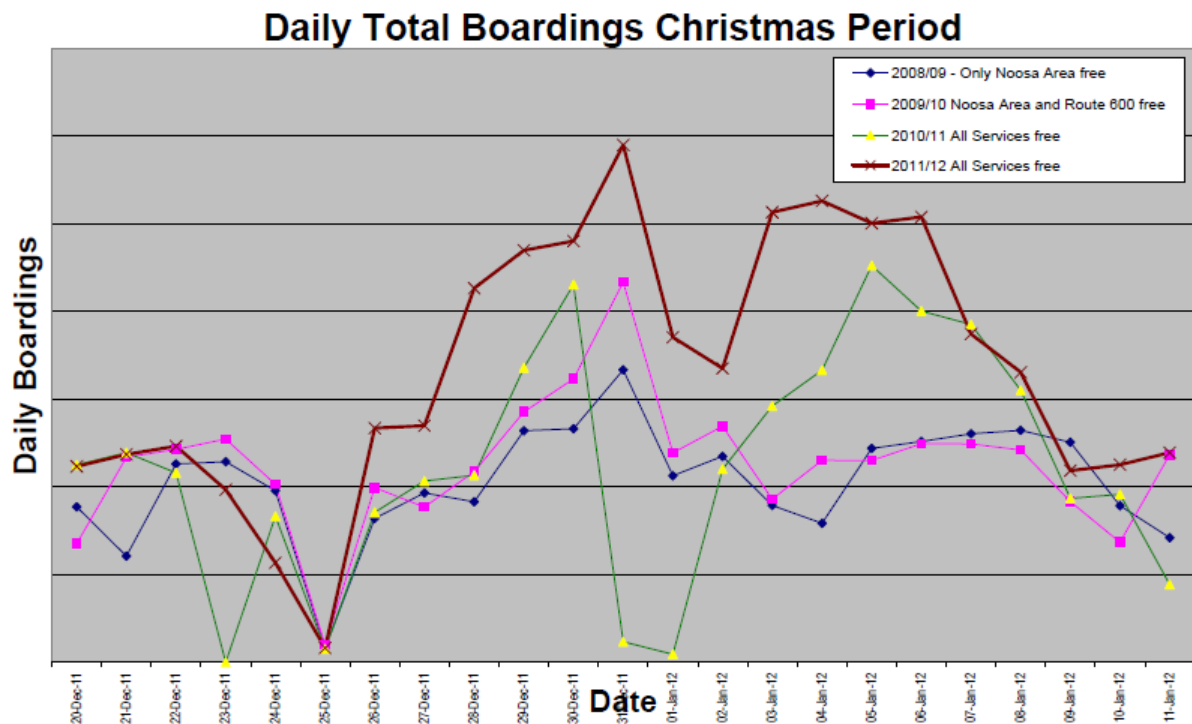
It has proven successful in:

- Raising the profile of public transport
- Major increases in public transport use in the period
- Assisting in dealing with the most congested holiday periods
- Enabling a trial use of public transport by non-users to promote travel behaviour change

The periods of the free holiday bus service across the years were:

2008/09	Only Noosa Services	26 Dec to 4 Jan	10 days
2009/10	Noosa services and Route 600	26 Dec to 3 Jan	9 days
2010/11	All services on Sunshine Coast	26 Dec to 9 Jan	15 days
2011/12	All services on Sunshine Coast	26 Dec to 8 Jan	14 days

The change in period length makes comparison more difficult to explain and put in context.



The above graph attempts to show pictorially the relative quantity of trips made on Sunbus services alone.

Almost 300,000 pax were moved on Sunbus services over the full 14 day serviced period in 2011/12. This compares to a total of about 200,000 for 2010/11.

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About 60,000 additional pax were moved on Sunbus services in 2011/12 over the equiv 12 day period compared to 2010/11.

The travel changes across the area were not uniform but may reflect the number of times the initiative has been available in that area:

Noosa Area: +28% overall,
Link between Maroochydore and Caloundra: +28% overall,

Caloundra Area: +39% overall,
Link between Nambour and Maroochydore: +46% overall,
Link between Maroochydore and Noosa: +46% overall,
Links Sippy Downs/Kawana SW/Maroochydore: +50% overall

During and following the free holiday travel period, for both 2010/11 and 2011/12, there were surveys of users as well as a web based feedback point for the community to comment on the initiative which provided the following results:

- Number of responses = 1,241 (818 surveys, 423 online) (c.f. 724 in 2010/11);
- 83% had used the service;
- 83% of respondents were residents;
- 93% were satisfied with the service;
- 50% were aware of Public Transport Levy;
- 96% supported this initiative;
- 37% would not have made the trip if there were no free holiday bus initiative;
- Purpose of travel was Recreation (51%), Shopping (33%), Work (10%);
- 58% did not regularly travel by public transport (i.e. less than daily);
- Only 37% travelled alone; and
- 64% would now consider using public transport as a result.

By any measure it can be identified as a positive outcome in terms of:

- general acceptance of the initiative and trial use by non-users (user survey results); and
- numbers of users.

It provides a point of difference for the Sunshine Coast and shows the willingness to innovate.

Unfortunately this initiative coincides with the yearly public transport fare increase (15% annually to date but to reduce to 7.5% in coming years) and so the identification of flow on benefits from this initiative alone is not able to be easily or directly interpreted.

Flexilink Services

Another early initiative was implementing Flexilink services to extend the ability of residents to connect to scheduled public transport services.

Of eight services that were operated to date, four have been terminated as the demand in the area did not currently exist. The remaining four services continue and several still show some potential for growth.

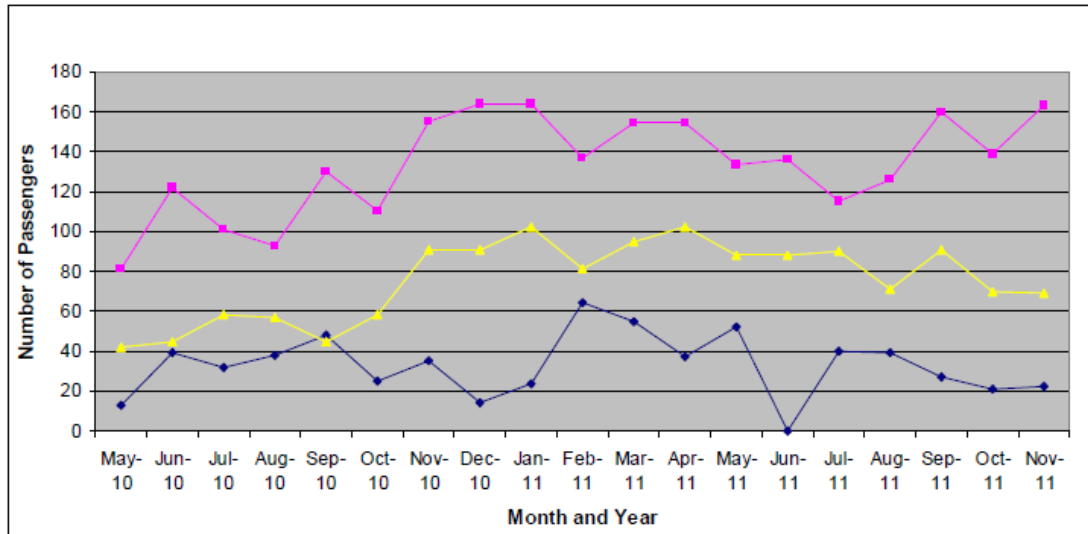
It is considered that this investment has been and continues to be beneficial as it has proven the existence of a demand for public transport.

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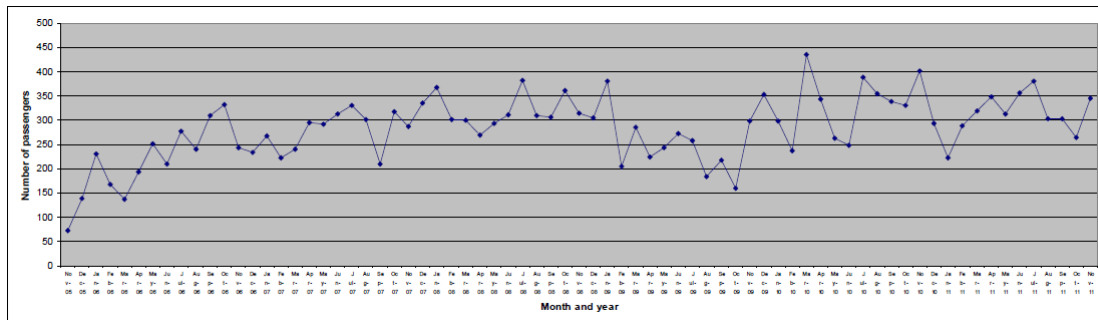
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The following shows the growth of the Flexilink use since inception.

Conondale-Maleny (pink); Peachester-Beerwah (Yellow); Kenilworth-Mapleton (Blue)



Boreen Pt-Tewantin



The remaining Flexilinks can be viewed as a success and create an important learning base not only for Council, but the community, as well as the Department of Transport and Main Roads and TransLink.

A demand for public transport has been identified from these areas using this type of service. As confidence in the service has grown then it would appear to have translated into usage. Analysis is currently underway to understand travel patterns to date. Currently there do not appear to immediately be specific preferred days of travel, and while there is a slight preference for some service times, there is use throughout the day.

The utilisation of the service can be demonstrated as the average number of trips taken compared with the maximum number available (18 trips) for the period July 2011 to November 2011 does vary considerably as follows:

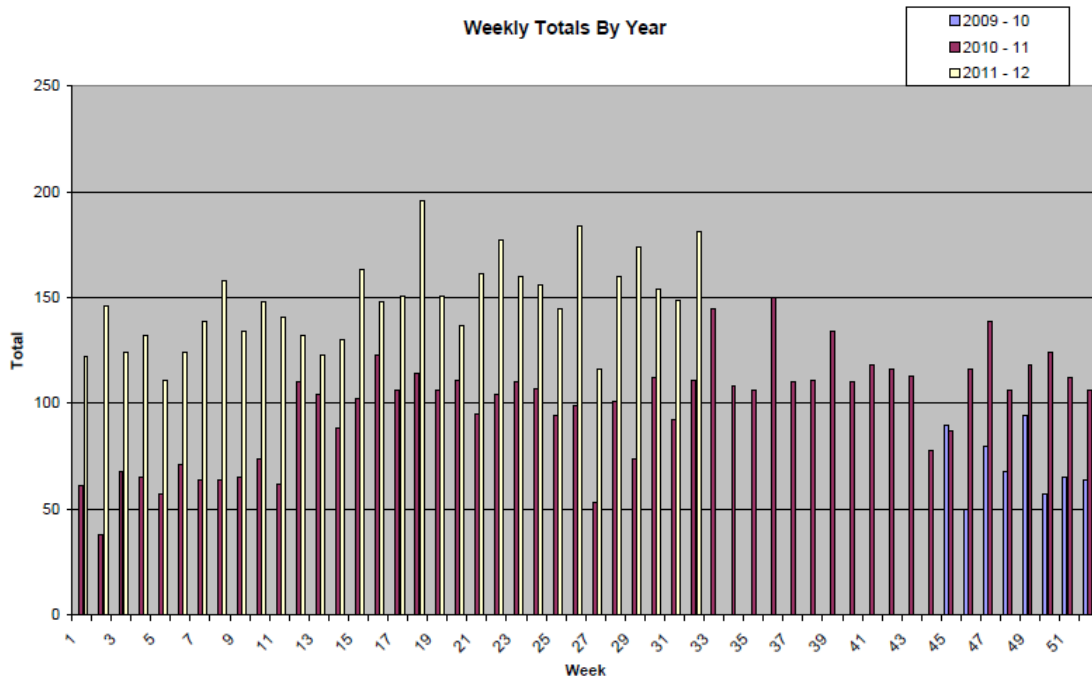
Boreen Pt – Tewantin	17.5 trips per week run (97%)
Kenilworth – Mapleton	7.25 trips per week run (40%)
Conondale – Maleny	14 trips per week run (78%)
Peachester - Beerwah	13.25 trips per week run (74%)

Surveys of users and the areas served will occur to enable discussion with Council and State agencies of the viability and future of the services. The replacement of this type of service with a bus service may increase confidence and usage further. This would meet the original intent of the flexilink services.

Council Cabs

Council Cabs has been successful in other large Councils in providing an additional travel option to persons who, while still independent, may have difficulty in using public transport, are reluctant to drive or are dependant on others (family/friends) for travel to perform basic business and personal living needs.

It was not intended that Council Cabs take over from an existing service but provide a complimentary option to existing services.



The Council Cabs service has grown steadily as shown by the graph below and passed its 10,000th passenger early in 2012. The communication and marketing of the service to the eligible users has been challenging and required specific targeted approaches which appear to have been successful. The service is now approaching 5,000 trips since inception and so is averaging over 2 passengers per trip since inception.

The service has received good feedback from users and can be considered to be a success in terms of growth and providing a viable option.

Maroochydore Service Change

The Maroochydore Service Change was undertaken with TransLink. It took effect on 13 December 2010 and included several initiatives which were fully funded or partially funded by the Public Transport Levy. These included Routes 600, 613, 619, 620, 622. The primary aim was to achieve a public transport service to the Sunshine Coast Airport as well as changes to the network to facilitate longer term network legibility.

Details of this investment are described to show the need to consider the connected network rather than a stand alone item at times.

A contribution was made for the reconfiguration and realignment of Route 622 into the Sunshine Coast Airport from 13 December 2010. It created a parallel route to Route 620 for the first time to better serve the breadth of coastal community between Noosa Heads and Maroochydore. No comparable performance data is relevant due to the extent of change.

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As part of the Maroochydore Service change on 13 December 2010 improvements were made to Route 613 with a doubling of frequency and realignment to serve an area which was not previously serviced along Millwell Road. The result of this investment was just over a doubling of the patronage.

A number of weekend service improvements which brought forward proposed changes by TransLink under any Network Plan were affected. The services targeted were Routes 600, 619 and 620 and the change was effected from 13 December 2010.

The aim for both Routes 600 and 620 aimed to provide a constant frequency across 7 days making it more accessible on weekends and easier for residents and visitors to understand. It also tried to deal with some peaking load issues experienced on the weekend on these two popular routes. As this frequency change coincided with changes to routes which also ran over part of these routes it does make it difficult to provide clear definitive performance change information. Considering the routes individually and ignoring load sharing with new or altered layered routes the only observation is the minor reduction in use on a Saturday and a minor increase in use on a Sunday.

The aim for Route 619 was to convert a 5 day service to a 7 day service. This is important if public transport is to present itself as an alternative to car use or reducing the dependence on a second or third car in a family. Hourly services were provided which overlapped with other services in whole or in part. It is not possible to directly quantify the performance given the parallel changes to Route 622, segregation of Route 614, overlap with Routes 600 and 616. It is likely to have drawn trips from Route 600 as it parallels most of the route.

The investment is considered to have been beneficial given:

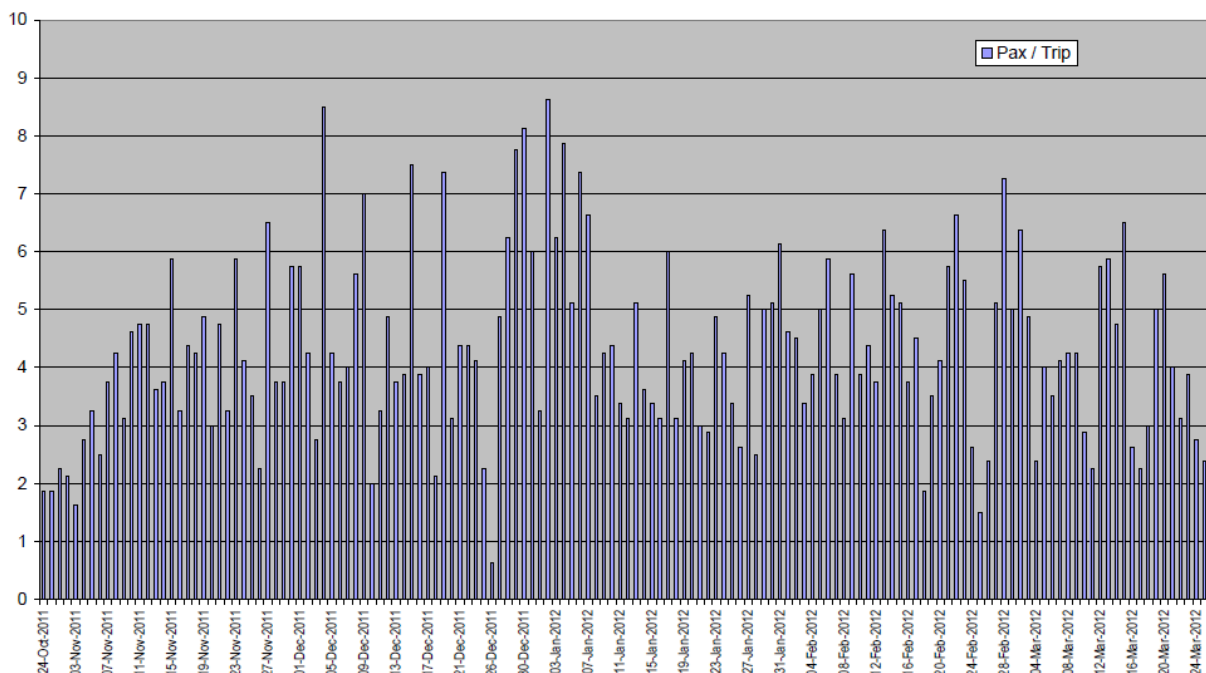
- the improvement in service frequencies,
- expansion of service days,
- provision of a permanent bus service to the Sunshine Coast Airport and
- an indicative minor increase in the number of trips overall for this change.

Coolum to Nambour Bus Service Trial

Council responded to historical requests to trial a direct public transport service between Coolum and Nambour. Investigations showed that which a travel option did exist it required a change of service either at Bli Bli or at Maroochydore depending on the combination of routes used. The travel journey varied through the day from between 60 mins and about 110mins.

A dedicated bus was provided at Councils expense which provides a direct single seat journey of 4 return services through the day with a consistent journey time of 57 mins. The following is a track of the performance to date. One of the key performance criteria to be met is the service reaching a minimum of 7 passengers per in service hour after a reasonable period of trial.

Coolum to Nambour Service - Passengers per Trip



Community engagement also occurred in January/February 2011 for the proposed trial bus service between Coolum and Nambour to help finalise the route alignment and the timetable.

This was followed up in March 2012 with a survey along the route to try to understand current usage patterns. The early information from this survey resulted in:

- Number of responses = 486 (386 surveys, 80 online);
- 72% of respondents between ages of 40 and 79;
- 80% were aware of the service;
- 58% use the service; and
- Most popular locations travelled between (in order)
 - Nambour Hospital;
 - Sunshine Coast Airport;
 - Nambour Rail Station;
 - Birtwill St Coolum Beach; and
 - Coolum Beach / Nambour Central / Mt Coolum – Jarnahill St.

Discussions are proposed to be held with TransLink in August 2012 as to the operation and performance of the trial to date. It is usual to allow a service at least 12 months to try to establish a true indication of the likely patronage level.