



Commuters feel pinch

TRAINS AND BUSES

By **TREVOR PADDENBURG**

YOU might not believe it from these pictures, but public transport chiefs say there is plenty of room on Perth's peak-hour trains and buses.

Public Transport Authority spokesman David Hynes this week said the network was busy but not overcrowded, while monitoring of peak-hour trains at Bull Creek, Stirling, Esplanade and Perth Underground stations showed they were no more than 88 per cent full.

"If our trains and buses were not crowded at peak (times), it would mean we had wasted taxpayer dollars buying too much rolling stock," Mr Hynes said.

And he blamed West Australians for commuters being left behind on the platform or at the bus stop.

"The complaints we do get reflect (a) Perth people's reluctance to stand near one another, and (b) Perth people's insistence on standing near the train doors," he said.

Mr Hynes claimed WA

commuters also enjoyed the country's newest and most on-time trains, the best CCTV coverage and the only fully operational electronic ticketing system in Australia. He said a PTA survey showed 93 per cent of train passengers were satisfied, compared with 81 per cent on buses and 96 per cent on ferries.

But the comments have baffled commuters, pictured here without room to move as they left Perth station by rail on Thursday afternoon.

RAC head of member advocacy Matt Brown said he, too, was puzzled by the PTA's satisfaction survey, because a survey by the RAC showed two-thirds of respondents believed buses were too infrequent and more than half said trains were too overcrowded.

Sixty per cent said they could not get to work on public transport.

He said State Government investment was needed.

"Our population is racing along, our roads are becoming more congested, parking is becoming scarcer and we are going to have to rely on public transport," he said.

PTA figures reveal the growth in public transport use has slowed from a 15 per cent rise in 2008-09.

Figures released to *The Sunday Times* showed commuters made 131.6 million journeys on trains, buses and ferries last financial year — a rise of 2 per cent on 128.8 million journeys in 2008-09. This year the PTA is predicting the public will make 133.7 million train, bus and ferry journeys, a 1 per cent rise.

Mr Hynes said passenger numbers jumped significantly when the Mandurah train line opened and they had continued to grow at a slower rate since then.

Opposition transport spokesman Ken Travers said the slowing growth proved Perth's network was bursting at the seams and forcing commuters back into their cars.

Transport Minister Simon O'Brien said he had provided buses with lane and traffic signal priority, committed \$500 million to a bus procurement program, was extending the Joondalup railway from Clarkson to Butler and building the Northbridge Link.



NEW PATH: Bicycle Transportation Alliance president Steven McKiernan says better city cycle routes would help get more cars off the road and ease congestion. Picture: RICHARD POLDEN



**Sunday Times
SPECIAL REPORT**

Perth's clogged freeways will have to find room for an extra 50,000 cars a day within five years, according to new figures revealed by *The Sunday Times* last month. But with no major road upgrades planned, we examine what is being done to get commuters out of their vehicles and into other modes of transport.

Picture: DANIEL WILKINS