

Park-and-wait claim

KERRI-ANN HOBBS

DELAYS in peak-time outbound buses from the city to Belmont could derail City Hall's bid to get commuters on to public transport, users warned.

The 20-minute gap between the 5pm to 6pm bus departures would leave inner-city workers stranded and drive them away from the park-and-ride plan, according to

the Public Transport Users Association.

But City of Greater Geelong planners, who knew about the delays and failed to include the problem in a report recently ratified by council, say the problem must be fixed by the State Government-run bus service.

"That's when people will be using the service to get from the city back to their cars," Public Transport Users Association's Paul Westcott said.

"There are those problems with the frequency of services and the accessibility of drivers to the car park and buses

and the distance of the stops from the car park.

"That's fine some of the time, but with the weather we've had recently I can't imagine it would attract many people."

Council had initially considered running shuttle buses every 10 minutes from the High

St parking station to the city and back during peak times, but this was dumped because of cost.

Instead, council will spend \$12,000 to fix the free car park, asking commuters to walk to and from nearby bus stops outside K mart.

"While the City is not the authority respon-

sible for operating or regulating public bus services, we believe an increased use of public transport is to be encouraged," council's central Geelong manager Steve Bentley said.

He said the City worked in partnership with the Department of Infrastructure, Vic-

Roads, Taxi Directorate and public transport user groups on the issue.

Department of Infrastructure regional transport communications manager Jo Bishop said the council had never raised the bus problems with the department.

"We encourage passengers to seek out their closest bus stop as it may not be necessary to drive to the park-and-ride to catch a bus to the city," she said.