

# Fewer satisfied with public transport: Survey

## Bus arrivals and punctuality rated badly in quarterly consumer index

By **ROYSTON SIM**

COMMUTERS today are less satisfied with public transport compared to a year ago, according to a consumer index.

Satisfaction with the MRT system dipped by six points to 61.9 points out of 100. The score for public buses dropped by 4.8 points to 61.6 points.

The figures are part of a quarterly index released yesterday by the Singapore Management University's Institute of Service Excellence (ISES).

ISES academic director Marcus Lee said commuter expectations of public transport have not gone down, despite the

series of MRT breakdowns and gripes about overcrowded buses.

He said: "These developments have primed the weary commuters to be more intolerant of service lapses, negatively affecting how the customer perceives the service experience."

The institute surveyed 11,807 people on public education, private education, and the transport and logistics sector between April and June this year. Of these, 2,300 respondents were questioned specifically on public transport.

In the survey results, bus arrivals and punctuality were

rated the poorest among all other factors, which included ride comfort and travel time.

Taxis did not fare much better. Their score fell by 2.4 points to 64.3 points.

Commuters had expected more of taxis, possibly due to last December's fare increase, said ISES director Caroline Lim.

However, respondents did not see any improvement in taxi service quality, she added.

Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport vice-chairman Seng Han Thong said the results were "expected", noting that the breakdowns in the past year have tarnished commuters' impressions of the MRT.

An SMRT spokesman said that besides the train breakdowns, there could be dissatisfaction with public transport

"as a result of adverse media reports on train and bus services".

SBS Transit could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Responding to the index results, a Land Transport Authority spokesman acknowledged that it would take some time for commuters to regain confidence in the MRT system.

In other sectors, satisfaction with private education fell 5.4 points to 69 points.

Ms Lim said last year's score could have been inflated due to a clean-up of the private education sector that started in 2010.

The score for the overall transport and logistics sector fell by 1.8 points to 68.3 points. Satisfaction with the public education sector fell 2.8 points to 67.5 points.

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