



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 – TRANSPORT

MEDIA RELEASE

UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY'S FINAL REPORT INTO THE PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 September 2022

The Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport today handed down its report on the privatisation of bus services.

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC, Chair of the Committee, said ‘The findings of this report are clear - the privatisation of our bus services has been a disaster and it’s the public and workers paying the price.

‘There has been a continual degradation of services following privatisation, and workers and the community are furious.

Ms Boyd continued, ‘The people of New South Wales deserve accessible, affordable and reliable public bus services. They have a right to expect that the NSW Government will deliver this public service not just to make a profit, but because it’s the right thing for government to do – to empower community mobility and equity.’

‘The community and many dedicated bus drivers who worked for the NSW Government's bus operator, the State Transit Authority, have been let down by the government's decision to cease operating any bus services and contract out this responsibility to the private sector. This inquiry has taken a critical lens to the transfer of bus services in metropolitan and outer-metropolitan Sydney from the State Transit Authority to private bus operators, most of which are large and multinational companies. The areas which have in recent years moved from public to private hands are Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, North Shore, Northwest, Northern Beaches and Inner West, and Newcastle.’

Ms Boyd added, ‘The NSW Government's objective to cut operational costs and the private operators' objective to make a profit has come at the expense of effective and reliable bus services for the public, with a dramatic cut in bus services occurring across various regions. In addition, fair and equitable pay and working conditions for bus drivers have been compromised and some have been subjected to poor, and sometimes unsafe, working environments.’

There is a strong case for bus services to revert to government operation. The headline recommendation of this report is that the committee calls on the NSW Government to consider taking action to bring public bus services in the four recently privatised Contract Regions in metropolitan Sydney which were formerly operated by the State Transit Authority, as well as bus services delivered under the integrated public service contract for Newcastle, back into the operation, control and ownership of the NSW Government. In the meantime, the committee also makes several recommendations for significant changes to Transport for NSW's bus privatisation model.



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In addition, to improve bus drivers' working conditions, the committee calls on the NSW Government to lead, in partnership with relevant unions, the development and introduction of contractually-protected, industry-wide minimum pay and employment conditions.

Lastly, this report also considers the progress made by the NSW Government in the transition of the bus fleet to zero emissions buses. The NSW Government has important responsibilities to ensure that the roll out is accelerated, it procures and has ownership of this technology and assets, and that the transition fosters market diversity rather than favouring larger and multinational companies.

Information about the inquiry, including the committee's report, is available on the committee's website: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2858>

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For further information please contact Committee Chair, Ms Abigail Boyd MLC, on 02 9230 3676.