

**Submission
No 19**

INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

Organisation: Ku-ring-gai Council

Date Received: 30 March 2022

Inquiry into the privatisation of bus services

Submission from Ku-ring-gai Council

Most services operating in Ku-ring-gai are already operated privately (under contract from TfNSW), with the exception of Sydney Buses services 206/207/208/209 operating to/from East Lindfield the City, and the 137 service from Chatswood to Bantry Bay (via Roseville Chase).

During peak periods, buses are typically delayed because they are impacted by surrounding congestion, and it is unlikely that performance incentives (to run on time) typically built into privatisation contracts will lead to service improvements. More bus priority at key congestion points, and bus interchange upgrades at rail stations/key destinations are needed to improve travel time reliability, ease of changing modes and the overall customer experience. The reallocation of road space from general vehicle traffic lanes to Bus Lanes (either full-time or part-time) should be considered to assist operators in improving on-time running.

There is some concern that following privatisation, the goal to improve profitability for the operator may lead to the potential for unprofitable routes to be reduced in frequency or closed, or the removal of certain bus stops, which is a concern to the Ku-ring-gai community. This needs to be balanced against services that need to be reviewed because they are circuitous – less circuitous services may be traded off for more frequent and direct services to key destinations (stations, town centres, recreation facilities etc) in order to increase patronage, reduce travel time and potentially improve profitability.