

INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

Name: Mr Tim Crakanthorp MP, Member for Newcastle

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Ms Abigail Boyd MLC
Chair
Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport
Parliament House

via email - portfoliocommittee6@parliament.nsw.gov.au

INQUIRY INTO THE PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

Dear Chair

Abigail,

I write to you regarding Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport's Inquiry into the privatisation of bus services and the impact bus privatisation has had on my electorate of Newcastle.

Just like across much of NSW, the privatisation of bus services has had a severe and detrimental impact on Newcastle and the wider Hunter Region.

In 2015, former premier Mike Baird addressed over 300 community members protesting against the privatisation of buses in Newcastle. Mr Baird promised the Newcastle community that our transport services would not be privatised if the government could not provide better services.

Mr Baird and the NSW Government failed the Newcastle community on this promise. Since the NSW Government privatised the bus network in Newcastle in 2017, commuters have been significantly impacted.

The NSW Government's bus privatisation failure has had nothing but negative impacts on Newcastle.

Those impacted the most are our most vulnerable communities, including school children, the disabled and those who were seeking cancer treatment at the Mater hospital.

One mother wrote to my office advising of the poor service for school students:

"I am writing to inform you [Minister] of the failure of the 816 bus from Morgan Street Merewether at the scheduled time of 8.25 am nor the second bus at 8.30am on 5th September.

I dropped my son off at the bus stop at 8.15am and received a phone call at my work place at 9.10 am from my son to say he had walked home as neither of the 2 buses had shown up.

My husband left his workplace to go home, collect my son and drop him at school ... When he arrived at school the staff at student services told him there has been many instances of buses not showing up and students arriving very late."

In relation to the impact on the disabled, one person wrote:

"I have asked my daughter to please email you my complaint..."

I am a 78 year old woman who is vision impaired, I also have a severe essential tremor. I reside in a granny flat that my daughter has built. My family are committed to supporting me to live as independently as possible.

One of the great things about living where I do is that I am able to access all available services and manoeuvre around our city without having to ask my family or utilise a taxi.

Unfortunately, this has changed drastically since the new bus timetable has taken place. I understand these changes have been made as a cost saving. I would like to know who is the cost saving for?

... My independence and ability to access the community has been drastically cut because of the changes that have been made to the bus's limited options, limited bus stops. In total a reduction of availability...

I haven't even begun to tell you how difficult it is [now] ...I used to have numerous bus's I could catch and the locations of the stops were safe for me to depart. My current situation is if I am to get home now I have limited choices in buses, stops are unsafe to cross roads and the distance I have to walk is too far".

A person who wanted to access cancer treatment at the Calvary Mater Hospital wrote:

"The current/old service for me to get to the Mater for an 8.00 am appointment involved catching the 7.00am ferry to Queens Wharf ... A total travel time of 39 minutes, leaving me plenty of time to get a coffee before my appointment.

To get to the same appointment time under the new travel service ... takes 1 hour 27 minutes."

As can be seen by these testimonials, the negative impacts of bus privatisation have been felt deeply and by many, particularly our most vulnerable.

I invite the Committee to hold a hearing in Newcastle if they would like to hear about the negative experiences of the people of Newcastle with bus privatisation.

I thank the Committee for the important work they are undertaking and I strongly believe further privatisation of buses in Sydney would have the same negative impacts that bus privatisation has had on Newcastle.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Yours sincerely

**TIM CRAKANTHORP MP
STATE MEMBER FOR NEWCASTLE
SHADOW MINISTER FOR SKILLS AND TAFE
SHADOW MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION**