

**Submission
No 159**

INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

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Submission to the Inquiry into the Privatisation of Bus Services

Public transport is an important service for the government to provide to the community. This includes providing a service that meets the needs of the community effectively and affordably, including with areas or types of services that would not be (as) commercially viable if run by a private service. Having an effective public transport system is an important feature of building an equitable and sustainable transport network in the community.

Public transport is a key service for many people, who rely on it being affordable and accessible. Public transport can be an essential service for children going to school, people reaching the supermarket or their doctor and people getting to work on time. This includes many elderly people, young people, migrants, tourists and others - more broadly, it is a service that is used and relied upon by nearly everyone in the community at some point. The reasons people use public transport would vary, though one of them might be people who do not have access to or afford their own car, for example. There could be concerns that privatisation would lead to more expensive or less accessible or frequent services, which would impact particularly on vulnerable groups. Personally, I am a keen user of public transport, including buses. I prefer public transport compared to owning my own car, both for financial reasons and environmental/ethical reasons.

On the latter point, I support the idea of transitioning the bus fleet to electric vehicles. Public transport such as buses are already a low-emissions transport option, for people they can carry compared to e.g. cars. Having electric vehicles enables public transport to be even better from a low-emissions perspective. It also sends a signal, and gives a boost to the electric vehicle industry through mass purchase, that can encourage a wider uptake amongst society. As one article notes positively, the NSW bus fleet will be the “largest and most visible roll out of electrical buses in Australia” (Manly Observer 2021).

Supposing the NSW government’s bus privatisation plan is fully implemented, it should be carefully reviewed to ensure that it remains affordable and meets the transport needs of the public.

Kind Regards,
Benjamin Cronshaw.

Manly Observer. June 3rd, 2021. “Northern Beaches bus services go private; electric buses to roll out over eight years.” *Manly Observer*.

<https://manlyobserver.com.au/northern-beaches-bus-services-go-private/>