

## INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 8 March 2022

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Partially  
Confidential

Tuesday 6 March, 2022

## **Submission against the privatisation of Eastern Suburbs Buses**

**I wish to appeal against the privatisation of Eastern Suburbs buses because:**

1. The NSW Government **failed to adequately and genuinely consult with residents of the Eastern Suburbs** about privatisation of the bus services. This is despite numerous public protests and petitions against privatisation and bus cuts which were signed by thousands of people. Further, without consultation and despite residents' protests, the NSW Government (through its agency Transport for NSW) and in preparation for April 2022's proposed privatisation of Eastern Suburbs buses, recently cut buses, changed routes, and removed bus stops. Clearly these actions have been carried out to provide a private transport operator with a leaner and cheaper bus service to run. This is a case of putting profit ahead of the public the NSW Government has been elected to serve. These bus cuts and changes have already impacted negatively on the community, but those suffering most are the **disabled and the elderly**.

The former Premier of NSW, Gladys Berjikian, publicly stated in October 2019, that there would be **no further privatisation of buses**. The privatisation of Eastern Suburbs buses therefore demonstrates bad faith and dishonesty by the NSW Government.

The NSW Government's planned privatisation of Eastern Suburbs buses is **another example** of its lack of consultation with Eastern Suburbs residents. The other was its failure to consult and again listen in any meaningful way to Eastern Suburbs residents concerns about the building of the Eastern Suburbs light rail - despite many residents' protests. Subsequently, we have a light rail which serves only some Eastern Suburbs residents' needs, and which is not cost effective or particularly reliable. Eastern Suburbs ratepayers should not have to pay the price of the light rail failure with cuts and privatisation of its bus service.

2. We need a public and not a privatised Eastern Suburbs bus transport system, because a privatised company focusses solely on profit and not on serving the needs of the public. As such, the **disabled, elderly and vulnerable** will in particular bear the brunt of privatisation. (\*).
3. A public integrated bus transport system will be more effective in managing today's challenges (**climate change \*\***).
4. An effective public transport system can potentially save money, contribute towards **well-being, including mental health**, and help **rejuvenate the city centre of Sydney** post Covid (\*\*\*)).

### **Background to the above points**

**\* Disadvantaging Society's vulnerable.** Changes and cuts to Eastern Suburbs buses pre-April 2022's privatisation has proven **discriminatory against the disabled and the elderly** because previously easy access by bus to vital medical facilities such as the Sydney Eye Hospital has for many been taken away. Some **elderly and disabled people** now face a walk of over 1km to the Sydney Eye Hospital from where the bus drops them. This resultant **discrimination** caused by the NSW Government has occurred because as stated above, its priority is delivering to a private bus operator, a leaner and cheaper-to-run bus service – and **not** towards the public it purports to serve. Therefore, the

resultant **discrimination** caused by the NSW Government's recent pre-privatisation bus cuts and changes will no doubt be continued and or worsened by a private transport operator.

**Example:** Clovelly, where I live, previously had two buses from the suburb to Sydney city - the 338 and the 339. The 338, which finished at Central, was 'cut'. The 339 which went from Clovelly to Circular Quay, was 'retained'? Well, not really, as the 339 now finishes at Central!? In effect, **the 339 was cut.**

**Personal impact** I have to visit (like many others) the Sydney Eye Hospital on a regular basis. With the pre-privatisation bus changes, I can no longer catch the 339 buses from Clovelly to Martin Place – which is a short stroll to the Eye Hospital. Instead, I either have to walk to the hospital from Haymarket/Central (a good 20 plus minutes), or catch another bus or the light rail. Or, I can catch a 360 Clovelly bus to Bondi Junction and then the train to Martin Place – but again two forms of transport instead of one. The procedures I undergo at the Sydney Eye Hospital are not particularly pleasant, so being able to easily get to and from the hospital as previously, made life easier – and, I believe, was better for my well-being. I am at present very mobile, but imagine if you live in Clovelly and are **disabled or elderly** – the trip to Sydney Eye Hospital is now much more difficult – and probably impossible for some.

**Summary** – Clovelly has had one bus into the city cut, and the 339 changed route has cut access to most of Sydney city – including to vital services such as The Sydney Eye Hospital.

**\*\* Addressing climate change** is of increasing concern, not only for Eastern Suburbs residents but for the majority of the Australian population. An integrated effective public transport system will encourage people to leave their cars at home and cut emissions. Disparate private transport companies will not be able to achieve this. As a result of the NSW Government's lack of consultation and vision, not only residents of the Eastern Suburbs - but those of Sydney as a whole are being **stripped** of a precious opportunity to create a smart city, with an INCLUSIVE transport system second to none – and which contributes to cutting emissions and making the Sydney and the world a safer and healthier place.

**What have been the outcomes of the recent bus cuts/changes and how will privatisation compound them?** The NSW Government's pre-privatisation bus changes have already seen travel times increase, trips to the city that once required one bus now requiring two forms of transport and travel costs increase. The outcome is that people are **being discouraged** from using the Eastern Suburbs buses because it's **too hard**, and some are **already** driving into the city instead. This is evident from posts written on local Eastern Suburbs Facebook pages and online site 'Next Door'. It's likely if this trend continues the result will be that a private operator will cut more buses, further eroding the Eastern Suburbs bus service, and thereby encouraging and increasing the number of people choosing to drive their cars into the city. **The result – a rise in emissions.**

**\*\*\* Rejuvenating & creating a social Sydney for all and helping cut road maintenance costs.** An effective public bus service will encourage more people to travel by public transport, thereby contributing towards cutting road maintenance costs, as well as contributing to **revitalising Sydney City centre** (an aim of both the NSW Government and Sydney City Council). The NSW Government's pre-privatisation changes to Eastern Suburbs buses are likely to be continued by a private operator and will hamper this effort. As well, the ability for the **elderly and the disabled** to easily and fully participate in and enjoy what Sydney has to offer. This pre-privatisation changes are **detrimental** to the well-being of the vulnerable in our society, and private transport operators are likely to continue them.

**Example:**

*For the first time since Covid I went into the city to see a show. The show finished at 10pm, and I had the option of walking to Central (20+ minutes) or catching a bus or the light rail to Central/Haymarket to catch the 339 bus to Clovelly. As the show finished at 10pm, if I missed the 10:26pm bus from Central/Haymarket I would have to wait 30 minutes for the next bus. As a female, I don't feel that comfortable waiting at the Central/Haymarket C stand late at night (other females have said they **don't feel safe** waiting there). The other alternative was to catch a train from Martin Place to Bondi Junction and then catch the 360 Clovelly bus.*

*The show finished at 10:00 pm, and the last 360 bus from Bondi Junction to Clovelly left at 10:35. The train from Martin Place was late and I missed the bus. **I had to pay for a taxi home.** Prior to these bus changes, I would catch the 339 Clovelly bus from Martin Place.*

**Outcome:** *The illogical change to the 339-bus route makes travel to and from the city more difficult and less appealing, especially at night when you might have to wait 30 minutes at the Central/Haymarket bus stop (not that pleasant) – or risk-taking other travel options which don't connect well, and end up having to get a taxi home. The current transport options from the Eastern Suburbs are not 'fit for purpose'. They discriminate **against the most vulnerable** and do not encourage people to participate in Sydney city activities.*

**Request to the Inquiry**

**I strongly believe** that this inquiry should be widened to not only look at the privatisation of Eastern Suburbs buses – but also at the NSW's Government's pre-privatisation bus changes which have made life difficult for many, but particularly the **disabled and the elderly**. And, to consider the reversing them.

Thank you for considering my submission.