

## INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 31 March 2022

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Partially  
Confidential

31 March 2022

Dear Committee,

### **An attack on my quality of life**

The bus changes imposed on a protesting public in December 2021 have resulted in a drastic cut to the quality of life of everyone I know in the Randwick area who relies on public transport.

The cuts have been based on an obvious false assumption – that Light Rail can replace bus services rather than supplement them. The fact that where I live is an unviable 20 minute walk from any light rail stop seems to interest none of the ivory tower transport planners who have ignored community protest throughout 2021.

While the government erects glossy signs urging people to travel at non-peak times, it has taken away any means for me to get to the city in non-peak daytime. I have to travel at morning peak or I'm left with no option than to catch a bus to Bondi Junction and switch to a train.

Standing in the heart of the CBD on Park Street in the middle of a weekday the transport apps tell me the best way to Randwick is to catch a 333 to Bondi Junction and change buses to Randwick.

What utter madness.

The 339 is now the sole route that does anything for me but when leaving the city, it means walking large distances to Eddy Avenue from other parts of the city like World Square when previously the bus could be caught in many other stops throughout the CBD.

### **“We don't care” – the case of the 373**

The government's 'listening' to last year's public outrage about the cutting of the 373 was to cynically keep it in name but change the route so that instead of continuing on to Circular Quay to serve the needs of the thousands who want to go into the heart of the CBD throughout the day and night, the route is obtusely truncated opposite Museum, senselessly looping back to Coogee via Wentworth Avenue.

This change, and the similar truncating of routes 374 and 339 at Eddy Avenue speaks louder than any words in the face of the public's outrage.

It sends a message:

- We don't care where YOU want to go.
- We don't care that we are making life HARDER.
- We don't care that in the middle of a weekday there is no effective way to get to Randwick from the heart of the CBD.
- We as a government have OUR priorities and our agenda: a “rationalised” system, forcing up usage of the light rail, preparing the system for privatisation, reducing presence of buses from the CBD, and fill in any other patronising and technocratic justification here.

End result: nobody can get to the QVB as they used to except by walking 20 minutes at one end and walking 15 minutes from Liverpool Street at the other end.

What used to be a simple bus trip with a 374 or 339, or from Randwick shops on the 373 is now an unpleasant odyssey involving changing modes and lots of walking.

### **South East bus survey fiasco**

I also want to express my frustration and anger at the way the south east bus survey that was conducted in 2021 appears to have deliberately (and without any subtlety) not provided any selectable options for critical comments. The options were instead entirely soothing statements about how the bus changes were improvements.

The survey then provided a tiny box for "Other". Anyone with negative or critical comments had to type into a free text field. This type of 'dark pattern' creates biases and skews the result.

It is an obvious use of default bias to nudge results in the desired direction by not providing a pre-select option for "I will be negatively affected by the changes" and similar.

The lack of pre-select options for unfavourable sentiment also allowed a cynical presentation of "support" by aggregating all the pre-select options (which are all positive) and disregarding the negative responses which are "other" in a free text field and not easily measurable or countable.

Even the size of the box for 'other' didn't allow the user to actually see what they were typing beyond a few words making the user interface a struggle and a method of discouraging people who want to complain about the changes from doing so.

Either the survey was a very cynical exercise designed to give a false pre-ordained result of "overwhelming support" or someone has been extraordinarily negligent. This would fail any undergraduate survey design course.

### **Conclusion**

There is a nastiness and a cruelty to these changes. The December 2021 bus changes are an assault on our quality of life, perpetrated for reasons that have nothing to do with community needs. It has negatively impacted the quality of life of me, my family and my neighbours that I feel every single day. Buses that used to be well patronised now run empty, going nowhere in particular and with half the value they used to have.

The planners goals have been achieved: to dismantle the long-established bus network in the area and to "disaggregate" the bus services and routes of that network, and in that way to make the buses harder to access and use.

The uncalculated cost of all this is the trips not made, the social activities not undertaken, the additional time wasted, the reduction in amenity multiplied by hundreds of thousands of lives.

The buses that were cut need to be restored.

Sincerely