

INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

To say that the entire Bus and Tram/Light Rail system from Moore Park to the areas of Maroubra, Matraville, La Perouse, as well as many surrounding and related areas is, and has been, farcical may be grossly understating matters considerably.

It was once reasonably straight forward, one could not necessarily use the words 'simple' or 'easy', to travel between the above mentioned areas and places such as the City, Circular Quay, Central, as well as places like Botany, Mascot, Randwick, and Bondi Junction. It was far from ideal, but it was generally manageable if one understood and accepted that buses were often early - causing one to miss them, late - causing one to be late for appointments or having to plan to arrive far too early as a precaution, or did not turn up at all - causing all sorts of problems and delays to one's travelling and daily schedule.

It is too late for my own father who passed away last year, but he all-too-frequently spoke of such imposed inconveniences. Often two or three times a week. The changes that occurred prior to his death caused him, an active man of 78 years of age who did not drive and who relied on public transport, were simply too much and he gave up on a number of his regular trips to various parts of the Eastern Suburbs. He gave up on travelling to the city area altogether, due in the greatest part to the gross disruption caused by the light rail and all of the considerable problems that came with it. The timetables for the buses he regularly used were changed, routes were changed or cancelled, and times of operation were reduced or restricted to times inconvenient for a 'normal' public transport user such as he and a number of his friends and associates of a similar age.

My wife is also a frequent user of public transport, but getting from one place to another has been made terribly inconvenient and unmanageable, and is becoming near impossible as a reasonable consideration over driving. There used to be buses from Matraville to and from the city at times convenient and that 'made sense', if you like. Similarly with local connections to nearby suburbs as well as local shopping areas and beaches, many have been cancelled or removed. Now many of those that remain, or have been otherwise adjusted, start too late, finish too early, have significantly reduced service and frequency, and have routes that no longer align easily and properly with broader travelling needs.

Even getting buses to and from the incongruous imposition that is the light rail is difficult as best. Getting bus connections beyond the already difficult to traverse 'hub' at Kingsford at many times during the day but especially in the evenings approaches the nightmarish. It becomes painfully clear that the people who proposed, designed, funded, and ultimately created this monument to the farcical and ludicrous are not the ones condemned by location and circumstance to have to use it. Removing trips that used to take 15, 20, or 30 minutes, give-or-take, and replacing them with trips that take 40, 60, 100 or more minutes is absurd and an insult to the travelling public and tax-payers alike.

I suppose there must be some who have not been adversely affected by these seemingly arbitrary and in some cases apparently thoughtless changes that manifest as being ignorant to reality, but I have yet to speak to anyone who may be counted in that number. Yours in disappointment, frustration, and finally resignation.