



PRIVATISATION OF SYDNEY BUSES: THE REAL STORY

The privatisation of public buses in Sydney's Inner West, or Region 6 of the metropolitan bus network, represents a major change to Sydney's public transport system.

There are 233 routes in Region 6, with commuters taking more than 42 million trips on those routes every year. Around 1,300 workers are based in the four depots to be privatised – at Tempe, Kingsgrove, Burwood and Leichhardt.



WHY IS THE STATE GOVERNMENT PRIVATISING SYDNEY BUSES?

Transport Minister Andrew Constance says it's because there were 12,000 complaints about Sydney Buses in the Inner West in one year. This number is too much, so it had no choice than to privatise the service.

The reality is that buses in the Inner West recorded only 3.21 complaints per 1,000 trips – which is lower than other regions, including privately-operated services in the South West (3.36) and Outer West (3.38) regions. (Source: The Guardian)

What's more, late-running buses in the Inner West are not caused by poor drivers or bad management, they are caused by the crippling inner city traffic congestion. This congestion has been made worse by the State Government's decision to rip up city streets for major infrastructure projects such as the George street light rail and WestConnex.

This is not about the number of complaints, it's about this Government's obsession with privatising as many public services as it can.



WHY DID BUS DRIVERS TAKE INDUSTRIAL ACTION?

Transport Minister Andrew Constance says drivers were told to strike by "union bosses".

The reality is that bus drivers in the Inner West overwhelmingly decided to give passengers a fare free day, take strike action and have a uniform ban. They did so knowing they would lose a big chunk of pay and risk potential fines.

Workers at Sydney Buses are concerned about their jobs and the future of local bus services.

“They will all be private. In 10 to 15 years' time government will not be in the provision of transport services...”

Andrew Constance, Australian Financial Review, 20 March 2017.



WILL SERVICES SUFFER UNDER PRIVATISATION?

Transport Minister Andrew Constance says that privately-run buses will be better able to stick to the timetable.

The reality is that no buses – public or private – can get past the traffic in the inner city of Sydney. The running times for Inner West services are unrealistic, and are set by the State Government – not by Sydney Buses.

A private operator will have a profit incentive to cut costs and reduce service standards in order to make more money.



WILL WORKERS LOSE PAY AND CONDITIONS?

Transport Minister Andrew Constance says workers will get a five-year job guarantee, like workers at Newcastle Buses.

The reality is that the State Government has only given workers at Newcastle buses an 18-month job guarantee. Similarly, Sydney Buses have only been given an 18-month guarantee – and do not have any job security beyond that time.

Privatisation lobbyists like the Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) also claim that a private operator will run the service for a significantly lower cost. There are only two ways to cut costs in public transport:

- Cut wages; and
- Cut services.

That's why workers and commuters both lose under privatisation.



WHY SHOULD LOCAL BUS SERVICES BE RUN BY THE GOVERNMENT?

Transport Minister Andrew Constance says it's time to give a private operator a go.

The reality is that inner city bus services are too important to stuff up. You don't just 'take turns' to see how it goes.

Government-operated bus services have served Sydney well for decades. Commuters in the Inner West were not told that their bus services were on the chopping block before the last election. What's more, the former CEO of Sydney Buses told workers in December that their jobs were secure, and that a new five-year contract with the State Government was being negotiated.



SO HOW CAN WE IMPROVE BUS SERVICES IN THE INNER WEST?

The best way to plan for our growing city is to invest in better public transport - with more services, more often.

THE ANSWER IS NOT PRIVATISATION!



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