

# BUS EXPRESS

News and views from life in the bus lane



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RTBU NSW Tram and Bus Division



## Noose tightens around the city as George St closures extend

As the Light Rail construction continues in Sydney, members will notice the ever-tightening noose around the City with the closure of George Street, with more cars forced to use fewer streets, and buses working to new and unfamiliar timetables and routes.

The next phase of the George Street closure began yesterday, putting even greater strain onto Sydney's buses and trains.

It will only get harder this time, with the closure affecting Market Street to Park Street creating more pinch points and more congestion.



The Union wishes to thank all members who have managed this difficult change and kept the city moving.

Please keep the information flowing in about concerns you have about the changes.

## Opal card reader breakdowns worst on buses

More than half of the 15,000 breakdowns of Opal readers over the past year have been on buses, leading to a loss of state revenue and confirming Sydney bus drivers' complaints about the smartcard system.

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union said bus drivers had long complained about Opal readers failing, on a daily basis, all bus drivers are seeing problems.

Chris Preston said the union and its members feared that the NSW government would use a fall in revenue due to Opal as a reason to privatise the bus network in Sydney in coming years.



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## It's bright, it's loud, it's the Christmas Bus



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Newcastle as the first Christmas Bus hits the streets!

Newcastle's Christmas bus has begun operating for another festive season thanks to Margy Pannell. It's starting its 19th year rumbling around the city's

streets spreading Christmas cheer to all who see and ride on it.

At the Hamilton Depot, drivers vie for shifts driving the Christmas-themed vehicle.

Will any other depots unseat Hamilton for the honour of having the best Christmas bus?



*Divisional Secretary Chris Preston*



*Vice President Brett Peters*

### Know your Rights

#### Salary Sacrifice for Superannuation

**18.2** Where an employee has elected to sacrifice a portion of that payable wage to additional employer superannuation contributions:

- (i) subject to Australian Taxation law, the sacrificed portion of wage will reduce the wage subject to appropriate Pay As You Go (PAYG) taxation deductions by the amount of that sacrificed portion; and
- (ii) any allowance, penalty rate, payment for unused leave entitlements, weekly worker's compensation or other payment, other than any payments for leave taken in service, to which an employee is entitled under the Award or any applicable Award, Act or statute which is expressed to be determined by reference to an employee's wage, shall be calculated by reference to the wage which would have applied to the employee under this Award in the absence of any salary sacrifice to superannuation made under this Award.

## Life in the Bus Lane

### Meet David Macdonald, Mona Vale delegate

"I love the challenge of driving a big vehicle. I'm in total control and I'm good at it. I've been driving buses for nearly 25 years now and that time has gone in the blink of an eye.

You get passengers in good moods and bad moods. I always tend to treat people as I want to be treated, and everyone seems to understand that it's not your fault when the bus is late. You're getting them to where they need to go.

One day when I was driving I saw a bloke attempting to tip a woman and her stroller with a baby inside into the oncoming traffic. She was running along the side of the road and screaming for help. I was able to pull over and lift the stroller over the bar and into the bus. I'll never forget that day and I was so happy I was in a position to help.

That's also why I'm in the union. I've got kids and I would want someone else to step in in that situation. It's important that people look out for one another."

