



Rail, Tram and Bus Union

MEDIA RELEASE

23 May 2015

Opal disaster hitting state's bottom line; putting safety at risk

Fixing the malfunctioning Opal card system is not just critical for the State's bottom line, but also for passenger safety, bus drivers said today.

The call follows revelations that Opal card reader malfunctions on buses are costing the state millions of dollars in lost revenue.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) Bus Division President Gary Way said that bus drivers have been calling on the State Government to fix the Opal card machines since they were first introduced, to no avail.

"That millions of dollars that should be used for projects such as improving our public transport networks is being thrown away as a result of these malfunctioning machines is ridiculous," My Way said.

"Bus drivers have been telling the State Government that these Opal machines aren't working properly since they were first introduced, but we're yet to see any real action taken to address the problem.

"Of course bus drivers' concern is getting commuters from A to B quickly and safely, not ticketing prices, but at the end of the day it's difficult for drivers to watch millions of dollars in revenue being thrown out the window while at the same time being told there aren't enough funds for proper investment in our public transport needs.

"It's easy for the Minister to say it's no big deal, but that fact of the matter is the Government's Opal card blunder will cost us, the taxpayers, in the long run.

"The State Government is constantly talking up the need to save funds and crying poor when it comes to critical public transport improvements, but at the same time it is knowingly letting millions of dollars go down the drain rather than take action to fix the malfunctioning Opal card reader system.

"On top of the obvious revenue issues, malfunctioning Opal card machines mean that passenger safety is being put at risk as people jump back on the buses to try to tap off. There's a serious risk they can get trapped in the doors because it's very difficult for drivers to see them.

"It's time the Government took responsibility for the malfunctioning Opal machines and fixed the problem, not just because of the dollar implications, but because of the serious safety risks.

"No matter how the NSW Government tries to spin this, it's the state's commuters who are missing out and being put at risk by this Opal card disaster."

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