

# BUS EXPRESS

News and views from life in the bus lane



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RTBU NSW TRAM AND BUS DIVISION

## Secretary's message

It's been a busy start to the year with the implementation of Newcastle's new but substandard bus timetable, and the looming threat of a region 6 private operator to be announced any day now.

Unsurprisingly, we've seen a roar of commuter outrage over the ongoing issues of Keolis Downer's operation in Newcastle. Services have been cut, 15 per cent of bus stops have been removed and on-time running has plummeted.

We've said all along that this is what happens when you privatise a public service, but the Minister for Transport has refused to listen.

Now, one of Sydney's biggest bus regions is about to be handed over to a private operator - and we have no doubt we'll see the same consequences in the Inner-West as we have in Newcastle. You can read our media releases about Newcastle's buses below.

We send solidarity to our comrades in the rail division, as Sydney and NSW Trains members are standing united against a management team and Government who have refused to come to the table with a fair offer for over 6 months of negotiations, and have now had their industrial action suspended.

In Unity,

Chris Preston and Dave Woollams

### Canberra light rail: One tram a week to start arriving from end of March

Exciting news for Canberra commuters and members who will soon have 14 new trams on the 12km track from Civic to Gungahlin. We're very close to securing a Greenfield Agreement for those who will work on these tracks in Canberra.

## Ch9: Sydney's rail crisis could spread to bus network

Sydney's railway fiasco is threatening to spread to the city's bus services, with hundreds of services set to be privatised. 9NEWS understands in coming days the NSW government will announce the private company that will run Inner-West and Southern Sydney (Region 6) buses.

The move has infuriated unions, who last year walked off the job for 24 hours after the government made it clear the services would be sold off.

"This workforce is furious. This workforce was betrayed by this minister," RTBU NSW Secretary Chris Prestons said. Watch the Channel 9 News story on Bus Express.



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## Newcastle commuters bearing the brunt of a slower service

Figures have revealed that commuters in Newcastle are bearing the brunt of a far slower commute after a private operator took over Newcastle buses in July last year. Chris Preston, RTBU NSW Bus and Tram Division Secretary said “This is exactly what we said would happen. Minister Constance recklessly sold off Newcastle’s public buses to an incompetent private operator so that they both could make a buck. And now, it’s commuters who are paying the price for Constance’s recklessness with ridiculously low on-time running rates, and the removal of routes. The Newcastle Herald (8/1/18) revealed that the on time running of Newcastle’s buses have plummeted from 87 to 52 per cent since Keolis Downer took over. **Read the Media Release on Bus Express.**

## Bus drivers warn timetable a disaster

Bus drivers say the new bus timetable in Newcastle region is proving to be shambolic, with reports of stress for less-able commuters, kids being left stranded and over 200 bus stops being closed. RTBU NSW Tram and Bus Divisional Secretary, Chris Preston, said that the bus service has been disastrous since the NSW Government privatised the service last year. “It’s simply not good enough. Day after day we hear reports about things going wrong with the bus service,” Mr Preston said. **Read the full Media Release on Bus Express.**

DIVISIONAL SECRETARY  
CHRIS PRESTONDIVISIONAL PRESIDENT  
DAVID WOOLLAMS

# Fears more than 160 bus manufacturing jobs in NSW are at risk

The NSW government could have had these buses made right here in Sydney but instead they sent the work to Malaysia. These losses lay squarely at the feet of the Transport Minister Andrew Constance. Under this NSW Government, we’re sending Aussie jobs overseas, instead of building quality buses here in Australia. A disgrace.

The SMH reported that, “Up to 161 workers fear the loss of their jobs with the future of bus manufacturing in NSW at risk after a company in Western Sydney went into administration. Custom Bus, which manufactures buses in Villawood, on Friday said it had gone into administration but would not confirm how many of its workers were being made redundant. “Andrew Constance can’t run the rail system, he bungled the naming of a ferry and now he has made an appalling decision to send a bus contract overseas that is costing Australian workers their jobs.” Mr Murphy said.

## Minister Constance flogs commuters with secret price hike

In January the Sydney Morning Herald revealed that Opal fares have sneakily risen by a whopping 10 per cent since the last ticket overhaul in September 2016. This comes as no surprise as we have a Minister for Transport who cannot be trusted by workers or the general public.

While the Minister continues to recklessly flog off the entire transport network, his incompetence is destroying commuter experience, all while he charges them even more. In Newcastle for example, we’re already seeing the hallmarks of privatisation destroying transport, with Newcastle commuter’s facing the closure of 200 bus stops on Monday, along with on time running plummeting from 87% to 52% since the new private operator began. This is a disgrace.

Commuters should be outraged that we have a Minister for Transport who is hiking up prices, while driving down services to an all time low. This is what we’ve been warning all along.

