

**ITEM MAYORAL MINUTE: COMMUNITY DEMANDS
ANSWERS ON CHANGES TO INNER WEST BUS
SERVICES**

Department Executive Services

Author Initials: AT

REPORT

At our October 2020 Council meeting I made Council aware of a number of upcoming changes to timetables for local bus services that were set to have a detrimental effect on our community.

On October 25 residents in the suburb of Canada Bay and surrounds saw public buses disappear from local streets as changes to inner west bus services took effect.

These changes took effect with no approach to Council for feedback and no community consultation.

The October Mayoral Minute outlined examples of the many detrimental effects the changes would have on our community including but not limited to:

- Forcing residents to walk up to half a kilometre further to their closest new bus stop
- Severing a direct bus link to the City for many local residents
- Removing the bus route and bus stop in front of Concord Oval, essentially removing direct public transport access to Council's new \$70 million facility which has been funded in partnership by both the State and Federal Governments
- Causing significant further impact on local parking and road congestion during local sporting days in Concord by removing transport access to key Canada Bay sporting facilities in the area including sports fields, hockey fields and tennis courts.

Our Council and our community have set emissions targets to make our City a better place to live and to combat climate change — any change to public transport must actively encourage residents to take up the option and remove cars from our local streets.

Since Transport for NSW or the private bus operator have not yet sought community feedback on these changes, Council decided to collect feedback through Collaborate Canada Bay and I invited the NSW Minister for Transport and Local MP to a meeting where our community's concerns would be raised.

I am disappointed to report that over a month after we offered the Minister a meeting to receive feedback from our community and well after the changes to the

timetables had proceeded, we received a letter from the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads detailing the supposed benefits of the changes, ignoring our request for a meeting.

To date Council has received submissions in regards to these changes from 114 residents. Of those residents:

- Over 91% do not support the changes to inner west bus services
- Over 90% believe that the changes will negatively impact access around our area and into the CBD
- Over 87% believe that the changes will lead to more residents using private transport
- Over 91% believe that the changes will negatively impact mobility for residents in our area who have no access to private transport.

Further to this feedback I have also heard concerns from our community about the loss of on-street parking on Great North Road and Ramsay Road due to expanded and new bus stops. It is noted that these are state roads under the control of Transport for NSW and hence Council approval was not required for these changes.

Whilst it is important that bus services into this key centre are enhanced, it is apparent that the community feel they were not adequately consulted to assist in reaching the best outcome.

I remind Council that earlier this year we stood with our community and Member for Drummoyne John Sidoti to reject changes to ferry services that would have severed the direct link to the City for our residents and our local member has once again stood with residents and Council in opposing these change.

In his petition opposing the changes, John Sidoti stated that “Bus services should not be cut. They should be increased in line with the growing population in the area. Changing the bus services without any genuine attempt at consultation is unacceptable.”

Any changes to public transport in our City must only act to bolster the ability for our community to use public transport and must make public transport a more appealing alternative to private transport. This is imperative to the future of our City and indeed our planet.

I will be reaffirming the requirement for a meeting with the Minister, local member and the Shadow Minister so that our community’s voice on this matter will be heard.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the Mayor write to the NSW Minister for Transport and Roads the Hon. Andrew Constance MP, NSW Shadow Minister for Transport Mr

Chris Minns MP and Member for Drummoyne the Hon. John Sidoti MP requesting an urgent meeting at which our residents feedback on the recent bus network changes can be tabled.

2. THAT Council publicise the above response data from Collaborate Canada Bay to highlight our community's concerns and continue to collect submissions from residents.

