



Andrew Constance

Minister for Transport and Roads

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 24 October 2019

NEW BUS CONTRACTS TO DRIVE IMPROVED SERVICES

Bus customers will receive additional services and innovative on demand options under new contracts to lift the standard of transport across Sydney.

Minister for Transport Andrew Constance said the reform was designed to ensure the best outcomes for both customers and staff.

“Our bus drivers are the best in the world. They do an amazing job in getting people around this incredible city and play a vital role in helping to tackle Sydney’s congestion,” Mr Constance said.

“Bus patronage has increased by more than 50 per cent over the past six years. This rate of growth outstrips that of all other forms of public transport and we need to address this increasing demand as a matter of urgency.”

The NSW Government will invite the world’s leading public transport operators, Australian and international, to bid for contracts for 13 of Sydney’s bus contract regions over the next three years. This will include the three remaining State Transit operated regions.

Mr Constance said a competitive tender of all Sydney metropolitan bus contracts will enable the NSW Government to reinvest more into delivering better services to commuters.

“We know customers want more buses, more often, as well as a mix of bus services that cater to their needs. This includes high-frequency services on major routes, like the B-Line, and frequent direct options such as on-demand services for short, local trips.”

“The NSW Government will engage with the private sector to transform the current, one-size-fits-all model of service delivery, to one with multiple service types including high-capacity routes and local and on-demand travel.”

Contracts for the three remaining State Transit Regions 7, 8, and 9 – covering Ryde, Gladesville, the Northern Beaches, Lower North Shore, the CBD, and the Eastern Suburbs will be included and be put out to tender by early 2020.

The NSW Government will continue to:

- own State Transit buses and all other assets such as depots,
- regulate timetables, safety, and service priorities, and

- set fares as they are today, under the Opal system.

The reform will also see Sydney's ageing diesel bus fleet replaced by electric vehicles to reduce the impact of buses on the health and environment of our city.

"Making the switch to an entirely electric bus fleet will deliver huge benefits to the community in terms of reducing air and noise pollution, as well as our incredible drivers," Mr Constance said.

"As part of this process, we will challenge the industry to begin an ambitious transformation of our bus fleet from particulate emitting diesel to zero-emission buses.

"The experience of other leading European cities demonstrates that a rapid transition to zero-emission buses is possible and I have asked Transport for NSW to work with operators and bus suppliers to develop a plan to transition our fleet as part of the tender process.

"Zero-emission buses are becoming the standard with the significant environmental, health and operational cost benefits being experienced now in cities like London, Paris and Amsterdam. As a truly global city Sydney deserves the same."

Mr Constance said there would be jobs for the majority of State Transit award staff with the new operator(s), including all bus drivers and maintenance staff, whose jobs will be guaranteed for two years. These staff will also transfer with all their accrued entitlements such as annual leave, sick leave, long service leave, superannuation and their three-year travel pass.

"Today's announcement is not a reflection on the performance of State Transit bus drivers who have been doing an excellent job dealing with the strong surge in passenger numbers and demanding road conditions," Mr Constance said.

"We expect more jobs for bus drivers to be created due to the extra services that will be provided.

"We have started engaging with all staff and their union representatives about today's announcement, and will continue this right through the tender and transition process."

MEDIA: Mia Burns | 0455 338 762