



N.S.W

MEMBERS' BULLETIN

RAIL TRAM AND BUS UNION

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To: RTBU Members,

Government Forced into Metro Backdown

On Sunday the 21st of February the State Government announced its long-awaited Metropolitan Transport Plan. (Formerly known as the transport and urban planning blueprint)

The Government has again changed its position on a number of important issues. In particular, it has abandoned the controversial CBD Metro project and will instead invest more money in the existing rail and bus networks.

The North West rail link is back on, and the need for more busways has been recognised. There will be more platforms at key stations, bringing relief for peak hour crowds. A new rail tunnel from Eveleigh to Wynyard tunnel will be built to will improve travel for trips to the outer west and to increase network capacity. More new trains and buses will be purchased.

This change in direction is a major win for public transport workers.

We've been telling the Government to expand the existing networks for years. Last June we released our *Fixing the Network* plan, which highlighted the need to build the South West and North West rail links, and finish the Chatswood to Parramatta link.

But while we have successfully forced the Government to abandon the Metro, and redirect funds to more important priorities, the new plan has some major holes.

Last week I spent many hours talking to television, radio and newspaper reporters and our message is clear, the new transport plan on the right track, but both political parties need to do more, and need to act sooner.

Work on the North West rail link, for example, is scheduled to start in 2017. There is no good reason for waiting this long – this project has been on the drawing board for years and is shovel ready and work could commence as early as next year.

The community is already suspicious of the Government's record on delivering transport promises. They will stay sceptical until they see shovels in the ground, tracks being laid and new buses hitting the road.

We also need more information on how the expanded network will be staffed. The new trains and buses won't drive themselves. Public transport workers are already under enormous pressure dealing with record patronage levels.

It's all well and good for the Government to invest infrastructure, but it also has to invest in people.

As you know, the RTBU in conjunction with the Daily Telegraph conducted "The ultimate transport commuter survey" before Christmas. Over 3,500 people responded to the survey – an incredible result. The Daily Telegraph was running stories last week about the survey results and we will be releasing a full report on the survey results soon.

The results show that commuters are right behind us – they want to see more frequent public transport services, and they want to see more people working on the system.

Together, public transport workers and commuters will be powerful force putting pressure on both parties to act in the lead-up to next year's State election.

Bulletin Issued & Authorised by ALEX CLAASSENS – BRANCH SECRETARY