

Council Ref: 261.G, 255.G Workshop Part 2 (LO:LO)
Your Ref:

14 August 2008



Mr Jim Glasson
Director General
Ministry of Transport
GPO Box 1620
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Glasson

Draft Bus Review

In response to the draft bus review conducted by the Ministry of Transport Council offers the following comments:

The proposed bus network changes for the Eastern Suburbs offers no improvement to public transport within the Woollahra LGA.

In the current climate, governments are on one hand advocating residents to be more environmentally conscious, to use fewer resources and create fewer emissions, and on the other denying the public transport system the funding and resources required to support this aim. Public Transport is a service that should be used effectively to support residents to travel in a more sustainable manner, reducing emissions and congestion. This will only happen when the Public Transport system is adequately funded and is not struggling to meet the existing demand and continually cutting valuable services.

Council believes that the NSW Government should be providing sufficient assistance and funding through the Ministry of Transport to the bus service operators so that they can provide the valuable and much needed services to residents rather than continually rationalising the available transport options, which makes it more difficult to travel to the required destinations using public transport. This is reinforced by feedback and a long history of complaints to Council in relation to inadequate bus services in the Woollahra LGA.

The combination of multiple fares, timetable issues and the time taken to get to a destination are the most common reasons cited by residents for not using existing public transport services. Our residents report feeling that they are "forced to use cars" due to the lack of direct bus routes to their destinations or due to inadequate service on existing routes. This leads to bus patrons either paying multiple fares in using several buses and experiencing excessive trips times, or bus patrons abandoning public transport altogether resulting in an increase of car usage in Woollahra.

Methods to improve this are to increase the number of direct services, to increase the frequency of bus services on existing routes, and to introduce integrated/combined and/or timed tickets so that residents who need to change modes or buses are not disadvantaged

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by paying multiple fares to get to their destination. Unfortunately, the current proposal by the Ministry of Transport offers none of the abovementioned solutions.

As a result of the 2001 Better Buses review a number of bus services were discontinued in the Woollahra LGA and appeared to be a rationalisation of services rather than a program to improve bus service provision. The public transport gap most commonly identified by our residents was a bus service linking the Woollahra LGA (in particular Rose Bay, Double Bay and Watsons Bay) to the University of NSW and hospitals in Randwick. This was clearly substantiated by our survey results where 71% of responses identified this as an essential service.

To support the our residents' desire for improved bus services in the current bus review, Council has held community forums on transport and has also conducted extensive surveys of Woollahra residents. The Minutes of the two most recent forums are attached (see attachments 1 & 2). Additionally, during the second forum, Ed Osiowy – Senior Planner, Sydney Buses requested a copy of the survey data and responses from the 2006 survey of ferry users at Rose Bay. These are attached also for your information (Attachment 3).

The results of our most recent bus service surveys are summarised in the attachment entitled “Results from Bus Service Surveys in Woollahra” (Attachment 4). It should be noted that a large number of these survey responses (41%) were from local community organisations and resident groups.

It should also be noted that the Woollahra Access Committee has also submitted a list of comments and questions for the Ministry's consideration and response (Attachment 5).

The existence of a usable and reliable bus service, which truly reflects the demands of the general public, is an essential public service in an urban environment. The recommendations of the current review, however, provide no improvement to public transport in Woollahra and therefore are considered to be of no value to the local community.

It is imperative that the Ministry of Transport conduct a thorough review of public transport in the Woollahra LGA and surrounds, genuinely taking into account the requirements of the community.

Yours sincerely


Gary James
General Manager

Attachments:

1. Minutes from Tackling Transport Forum -22 November 2007
2. Minutes from Tackling Transport Forum – 24 July 2007
3. Ferry survey data
4. Results from Bus Service Surveys in Woollahra
5. Woollahra Access Committee Comments

CC: Denis Mole, General Manager – Sydney Ferries
Rino Matarazzo, General Manager, Customer Service City & East - CityRail
Christine McDavitt, Community Liaison Officer – STA