

# OUR TRANSPORT

The New South Wales Premier Mike Baird is trying to sell off Newcastle's Bus and Ferry services to a profit-driven private operator.

Privatisation of our public transport will see services slashed, jobs cut, and it will cost you more.

Pensioners, students, people with a disability, and low-income families rely on our public transport to get around and won't be able to afford to pay more if the service is privatised.

Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Councils, local MP's, the Shadow Transport Minister and the community have all condemned the Government's proposed sell off of our Buses and Ferries and are joining the call to keep our transport in public hands.

The Our Transport campaign gives everyone in the community the opportunity to have their voice heard and keep up to date about the Baird Liberal Government's push to privatise Newcastle Buses and Ferries.



## 1. SIGN OUR PETITION

Sign our petition at [ourtransport.org.au](http://ourtransport.org.au) to stand up for local public transport services in Newcastle.

## 2. LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Like us on Facebook

 [facebook.com/OurTransport](https://facebook.com/OurTransport)

and follow us on Twitter

 [@ItsOurTransport](https://twitter.com/ItsOurTransport).

## 3. CONTACT THE PREMIER

Write, call, email or tweet the Premier and tell him **Newcastle needs publicly owned and operated bus and ferry services and it's not his to sell off.**

The Hon Mike Baird  
Parliament House  
6 Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

 Mike Baird

 @MikeBairdMP

email: [premier@nsw.gov.au](mailto:premier@nsw.gov.au)  
Tel: (02) 9230 2111



# LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON: Mike Baird continues fathers bid to end public buses

## The more things change, the more things stay the same.

We look on all the advances that our community has made in the last 25 years and think back to the days before mobile phones, email, flat screen televisions, and GPS. Society has grown and changed.

But, more than two decades later, we are still fighting some of the same battles.

Today, the Premier of New South Wales is Mike Baird.

In 1992, the Transport Minister was Bruce Baird, Mike's father.

Today, the Premier and his government are trying to privatise Newcastle Buses.

In 1992, Bruce Baird tried to do the exact same thing.

Back then, Baird Senior was all about cost cutting. He made a lot of noise about the cost per passenger being three times higher in Newcastle than what it was in Sydney.

Baird Senior decided that because total expenses per passenger trip in Sydney were \$1.52, but were \$3.81 in Newcastle, it was time to sell it off.

Even back then, the Bairds refused to see that providing a service in a regional area, is different to providing a service in Sydney.

In 1992, Bruce Baird described the Newcastle bus network as inefficient and put the "unions on notice" about possible reforms.

The problem for Minister Baird was that the union was supporting reform, and supported a review into the Newcastle bus service. But, like today, the government refused to listen and just shut down any review.

In the current round of threats to privatise from the NSW Government, Newcastle Buses have requested a service review multiple times, something that is already well overdue to occur as part of the contract between STA and the government.

This exact same tactic was used by Bruce Baird and the former Liberal Government 24 years ago – hold back a review, don't try and fix what's wrong, just let it continue.

If anything, they just want the situation to get worse to give them more ammunition to sell it off.

In 1992, during a grievance debate in the NSW Parliament, the former Member for Newcastle Bryce Gaudry asked Bruce Baird:

*"Why [the Transport Minister] has continually refused to allow Newcastle Buses management to implement the service review and route restructuring that was supposed to be implemented on 3rd December, 1990?"*

*"Why was the second attempt to implement those changes, which was to be on 1st July [1991], not allowed to proceed?"*

*"Why was the change proposed to be introduced in October 1991, not permitted by the Minister even though the agreement would have resulted in a saving of \$2.9 million?"*

Bruce Baird went a step further than his son has. He stopped a number of reforms that could have saved Newcastle Buses \$2.9 million per year.

Back then, and the same is true now, the government refused to allow a service review. Why was that? Because a review would have put buses where the public needed them and would have improved services and increased patronage.

At the time, the bus employees made every effort to change their work practices, but were told it was never enough. Members of the union had been willing to go along with the restructuring process, but were not going to give up their working conditions just because the Minister was holding them to ransom.

The drivers were told they would not only drive the buses, but also maintain them, and whatever other jobs were asked of them without having adequate training.

The questions that the RTBU are asking today are the same questions that the

Australian Tramways and Motor Omnibus Employees Association asked two decades ago.

Has the Department of Transport already prepared contracts for private providers? What will happen to minimum service obligations? What will happen to prices for pensioners and other disadvantaged people who rely on affordable public transport?

We know that the current Minister had already been in talks with private providers to buy Newcastle Buses and the proposed light rail. We know that private providers will cut unprofitable services. We know that jobs will be cut by a private operator – just like the 180 that went during the restructure in the 1990's.

Former Member for Newcastle Bryce Gaudry even echoed the exact concerns we have today:

*"If the Minister adopts the same approach to Sydney bus services as he has to Newcastle, those Sydney services also will be put out to the private sector for contracts."*

If privatisation is allowed to occur in Newcastle, it will be used as a test case for the privatisation of the whole STA bus network.

In a quote said by Bruce Baird in 1992, but easily could have been said by his son this week, or Mike's Transport Minister last week:

*"This Government is about reducing costs in transport and providing a better level of service. We mean to do it and, as I have said, we have put the unions in Newcastle on notice."*

Whether this is just what Liberals do, or if it is about Mike Baird settling old scores against the "intransigent union movement" as his father put it, we know that we've beaten them once, and we can do it again.