

## Bus union issues strike notice unless Berejiklian Government acts on public health concerns

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The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) NSW has written to the Premier giving notice of a 48-hour work stoppage next week if the NSW Government continues to fail to enforce health and safety guidelines on public transport to keep commuters and transport workers safe.

RTBU Tram and Bus Division Secretary, David Babineau, said since the Covid-19 outbreak the Government has refused to meaningfully address bus drivers' concerns over mask regulation, the enforcement of physical distancing on transport, and the privatisation of bus operations in Sydney under the cover of the pandemic.

Repeated meeting requests have been made since March from Mr Babineau, RTBU NSW Secretary Alex Claassens, and Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey, to discuss safety on public transport. These requests have been ignored by the Premier and Transport Minister.

“Bus drivers have been fronting up to work every day during this pandemic, despite great personal risk to themselves and their families, to keep our state moving,” said Mr Babineau.

“The Government has consistently failed to provide proper regulations for public transport users. What regulations they have put in place, such as passenger limits, they have failed to enforce.

“None of us have made the decision to stop work lightly, but we have exhausted every available avenue to sit down with this Government and voice our concerns. We have simply been left with no choice.

“Bus drivers have given notice that we cannot in good conscience continue to work in an environment that endangers themselves and the travelling public.

“Transport regulation is absolutely vital to public health during this pandemic. It is despicable that the Government would use this crisis to hand our bus services to private operators, which will always be incentivised to cut corners to make profits for their shareholders.

“We cannot afford to outsource responsibility for health and safety at this time.

“We’re calling on the Berejiklian Government to put the needs and safety of the travelling public first. We need a clear protocol for enforcing safe travelling guidelines that includes compulsory mask wearing by passengers when there are more passengers than green dots on buses and trams, providing clarity around the enforcement of physical distancing on transport, and ditching privatisation plans until this crisis is over.”

The work stoppage will commence on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August and affect bus operations in Regions 7, 8 and 9, covering North West Sydney, the North Shore, Northern Beaches and Eastern Suburbs.