



## Give them a bus or train every 10 minutes and they will come

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The SMH has been on something of a campaign for public transport this weekend. One article noted that one key to encouraging higher use of public transport is having frequent service - [Give them a bus or train every 10 minutes and they will come](#).

THE NSW Government could do Sydney's public transport-starved residents a favour by postponing the controversial \$5.3 billion underground Metro through the CBD and investing in some quick fixes, an international transport expert says.

The director of the International Union of Public Transport Australia-New Zealand, Peter Moore, said the Government should extend the heavy rail system, establish rapid transitways for buses in the outer suburbs and build light rail within a 10-kilometre radius of the city. ...

Mr Moore's view is backed by the Rapid, Active and Affordable Transport Alliance, a new network of community, environmental, public health and consumer groups, transport unions, industry associations and the City of Sydney.

An alliance spokeswoman, Gail Broadbent, said transitways – bus-only lanes that have priority at traffic lights – and light rail would eliminate the need for more expensive motorways. "A bus on a busway can carry 50 to 80 times the number of passengers than a single car and use up a lot less space than highways," she said. "It would also quickly reduce our dependence on oil."

Ms Broadbent said people already spend about \$12 billion a year on imported oil and, within six years, Australia could be importing 70 per cent of its fuel.

Mr Moore said the real enemy of good public transport was not cheap petrol or freeways but timetables. "If people need to rely on a timetable for a bus or a train, if they have to wait another half an hour if they miss a service, they will abandon public transport," he said.

Give Sydneysiders a bus or a train every 10 minutes – at a minimum – and they will come, he said. ...

In Sydney suburbs such as Blacktown, there were enough passengers to justify buses running every 10 minutes, Mr Moore said. As passengers increase, the bus routes could become transitways, which overcome the second major turn-off for commuters after timetables: traffic. "If you're on a bus, stuck in traffic for 20 minutes behind a line of

Transitways, such as those in Brisbane, where public transport use has risen 50 per cent in five years, can be upgraded cheaply for light rail. ...

University of Technology expert Garry Glazebrook said the lessons for Sydney from other cities was that "there is now a race ... to expand modern public transport systems and to curb the private car. Those cities that fail to do this will be left behind and unprepared in the new age of peak oil and climate change," he said.

The weekend editorial declared NSW state government transport a failure, and declared that the public needs to come up with its own plan (mentioning peak oil as but one reason why this is important) - [When governments fail, the public must set the agenda](#) (along with [It's time to put our transport system on track](#)).

THIS year is the centenary of the first attempt to plan Sydney, and its transport - the 1909 royal commission which led eventually to the decision to build the Harbour Bridge and the City Circle rail line.

A hundred years later, no similar vision for Sydney transport exists. The optimism, pride and - most important of all - the administrative competence which that vision embodied have seemingly all fled from the contemporary ranks of NSW's leaders.

The consequences of a lack of vision are not trivial. There is no need to detail the impoverished mess which is public transport in Sydney, or the daily inconveniences suffered by passengers obliged to use it. With every day that Sydney wallows in its conceptual chaos, the city is less and less prepared for great challenges which are rapidly approaching. Climate change. Peak oil. The epidemic of lifestyle diseases linked to urban design. All these will fall - are now falling - more heavily on this city because it lacks the vision to plan its transport and the will to act on its plan. ...

The Rees Government has demonstrated that on transport questions it cannot plan for all citizens of the state equally. So ordinary citizens must take up the task.

That is why the Herald is instituting the inquiry Sydney needs. The inquiry will be open and public. It will be chaired by Ron Christie, whose impeccable credentials include managing the public transport effort during the Sydney Olympics - which showed the system can work if the will is there. The inquiry will approach all questions with an open mind.

It will tackle not only issues of services and infrastructure, but most importantly those of finance: the besetting problem of transport development and planning in Sydney has been the lack of a long-term funding model.

It invites submissions from the public, and from interested companies and organisations. It will hold public hearings. It will issue a preliminary report by the end of this year, and its final report by autumn next year, as set out in the advertisement on Page Eight of today's News Review section.

A companion article takes a look at inquiry chairman Ron Christie - [Olympics people mover asked to do it again](#). The organisations web site is [www.transportpublicinquiry.com.au](http://www.transportpublicinquiry.com.au).

The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand | Give them a bus or train every 10 minutes <http://theoilbarrel.com/node/5704>  
Another companion piece looks at public transport initiatives in earlier years which were never (or only partially) implemented - [Blowing the whistle](#).



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