

Jo Haylen
Transport Minister



Media Release

Free public transport for bus drivers a major move to boost workforce

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All bus drivers will be able to travel for free on public transport, as part of a major overhaul by the Minns Labor Government to support the industry and improve services by incentivising more drivers to get behind the wheel.

The NSW Government is moving forward in delivering another of the key recommendations of the Bus Industry Taskforce Interim Report, which called for action to support driver recruitment and retention, including free Opal cards for workers.

Transport for NSW is now consulting with operators, employees and unions on the rollout of these cards, which drivers and other workers will be able to use to travel across the Opal-enabled public transport network and access all staff facilities on the Opal network throughout their shift.

This will ensure bus drivers have public transport travel benefits in line with Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink employees. Consultation will take place over the coming months.

Last month, the NSW Government kicked off a new recruitment campaign in an effort to address the bus driver shortage to help improve reliability for passengers.

Since the start of the recruitment drive, around 450 new bus driver authorities have been issued and there have been more than 56,000 visits to the Transport for NSW recruitment webpage transport.nsw.gov.au/busdriver.

The NSW Government has already made it quicker, easier, and cheaper for drivers to get their bus driver authority by waiving the \$70 application fee for the next 12 months.

Bus operators are also working to recruit more drivers, with incentives like referral bonuses of up to \$6,000 and reimbursing driver onboarding costs – such as the cost of Driver Authority training and licence upgrades.

Quotes attributable to Transport Minister Jo Haylen:

“We’re giving bus drivers a ticket to ride, with a staff Opal card so they can travel for free on the public transport network.”

“We are doing everything we can to attract new bus drivers and support our current workforce in NSW.”

“This is a no-brainer. We are taking action to address a key recommendation out of the Bus Industry Taskforce’s interim Report and support our hard-working frontline staff.”

“Drivers and operational staff like our mechanics have told us this is what they want, and we’re going to deliver on it.”

“Staff will be able to use these cards to travel across the Opal-enabled public transport network, including to and from work, and to access other facilities like train station bathrooms while they’re out on the road.”

“We want drivers to be able to comfortably take breaks between shifts, before getting back on the road and fulfilling their vital roles connecting the community.”

“The Bus Industry Taskforce will consult with employees, unions and operators over the coming months to help ensure a smooth rollout of the cards.”

“The rollout of these cards will mean every bus and train driver will be able to travel freely on the public transport network they proudly operate every day.”

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