

1. Introduction- Road Transport in Sydney & Newcastle (bold)

Horse buses ran in both Sydney **and Newcastle** from the 1850s. They were largely unregulated till local councils and transport commissioners took over in 1873 and the police in 1900. As trams appeared many vanished to feeder routes.

The first steam tram ran in Sydney in 1879, to the International Exhibition at the Garden Palace. The first electric tram ran in 1899 from Pyrmont-Circular Quay. The last electric tram ran in 1961 to La Perouse. **The first steam tram ran in Newcastle in 1887 and the first electric tram in 1923. The last tram in Newcastle ran in 1950.**

Sydney’s first motor bus routes were run by private individuals and licensed in a similar way to how horse bus routes had been handled since 1900 by the Police Dept. Traffic Branch. In 1924 they were first allocated route numbers, only to have these changed in 1925 which remained the basis of the route number system until the 1980s.

During the 1920s the government was increasing aware of competition between private buses and government run trams and so in October 1931 effectively legislated to make competitive bus routes feeders. The first government bus route (144) was a take over of a private route (and retained the same number). Others followed until by 1937 when the Bus Division of the Dept. of Railways & Tramways was formed, they began to plan and operate their own routes, still using numbers in the private series. **In Newcastle the first routes were take-overs from private operators, commencing in 1935. In fact in 1932 Newcastle may have been considered ahead of Sydney in its transport as it’s I initial Transport Trust pre-dated Sydney.**

In 1940 and 1943 government route numbers in Sydney **and Newcastle** were re-organised into *regional* groupings of their own, the latter being the basic system still used today. In this list, as the emphasis is on the history of a route, the previous numbers have been grouped with the last or current number (thus 88>880>480). Current routes are boxed and shaded.

Many routes are supplemented at peak times (eg 409 to Rookwood Cemetery). These are not listed unless they bear route numbers not otherwise used (eg X24 X80 X81) or are extensions (eg 358 Church service).

In Newcastle, a similar evolution occurred though they had their own variations. Industrial routes in Sydney were numbered as normal routes until the 1950s when the 000 series was created. **In Newcastle industrials were always in the 400s on their own.**

During the 1980s under the Urban Transit Authority there were moves to bring the control of all buses closer and a regional renumbering of the private routes (around the existing “government” ones) occurred. In the 1990s the Dept. of Transport (now Transport Infrastructure) divided Sydney into 15 contract regions with State Transit (Sydney Buses) the lead operator in 4 of these. **Newcastle came under the “outer metropolitan” area** designation and was similarly regulated. In 2010-1 the first real integration of routes occurred, when the Sydney Buses trial of Metrobuses was extended to private buses. Other initiatives such as free shuttles (painted green)

and “hassle free nights” late night buses occurred across all contract areas. In 2010 logos were changed to read “NSW Government” and the name of the bus company.

In November 2015 the NSW government announced a new transport concept for Newcastle where all modes would come under the one operator. State Transit was ineligible to apply. This was to start on 1 July 2016 (but was postponed) and from then on I will regard Newcastle bus routes and the Stockton ferry as in private ownership (and will no longer be chronicled here). Keolis Downer commenced overall control of all Newcastle transport from 1 July 2017 under a 10 year contract.

Richard Peck
2017
PO Box 199 Drummoyne 1470
rep359@gmail.com



For details of horse buses in Newcastle see Part 1 of my series “The Sydney Bus” and Vol 1 part 1 of “Fares Please”. Duncan MacAuslan’s new book “Ryle’wy” has many pertinent details of Sydney’s horse bus days.

For details of private motor bus operators to 1932 see Part 26 of my series “The Sydney Bus” (Country NSW part 2)¹. Part 29 “Newcastle & the Country” has additional information. Details of their tickets may be found in “Fares Please” Vol 1 part 2 & Vol.2.. Extra details may be found in part 33.²

For details of government tram operation consult Keenan, McCarthy & Willson, “Tramways of Newcastle”.

For Newcastle government bus routes 1932-2017 see Part 49 of “The Sydney Bus”³ Details of the administration and fares see “Fares Please” part 3. For school specials see Part 51.

The chapters that follow have been copied from my books on Sydney & Newcastle transport tickets and so may contain references to Sydney.

For tram, bus & ferry fares see “Tickets Please” part 3 & 6 (ferry).

¹ Available in State Library of NSW, National Library Canberra and archives of Sydney Bus Museum.

² Also available in Newcastle Library local studies collection.

³ Currently available on CD.