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B-Line Mark II: Costs put forward for new bus link between Dee Why and Chatswood

THAT'S THE TICKET



Robbie Patterson

MODELLING by Forest Coach Lines shows congestion-busting rapid buses from Dee Why to Chatswood could cost just \$4.5million.

CEO David Royle (pictured) has provided an estimate at the request of

Northern Beaches Council. It would cost the State Government about \$7million to fund an annual service, of which it would recoup \$2.5million in ticket sales.

It may be the price of a penthouse apartment in Manly but the State Government is reluctant to fund it.

Mayor Michael Regan said it was a "small price to pay".

"The Greater Sydney Commission and the Prime Minister talk about having a 30-minute city, and here is an opportunity for under \$5million to build a transport system which helps deliver that."

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Bust congestion for \$4.5m

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A RAPID transport corridor could be provided from Dee Why to Chatswood for about \$7 million according to Forest Coach Lines, which has put its pitch forward to deliver the B-Line style system.

Forest Coach Lines chief executive officer David Royle told the *Manly Daily* his company could have 13 buses ordered and delivered by year's end and to run the service for around \$6 million a year. Another \$1 million would be required for annual fleet costs.

The bargain basement price for the State Government to bust congestion is about the same as a penthouse apartment in Manly, given that the council's modelling shows about \$2.5 million would be regathered from ticket revenue.

The figures came in response to a request for a quote by mayor Michael Regan, who has renewed his push for the State Government to fund east-west rapid buses.

"We have been negotiating for a no-nonsense, 10-minute turn up and go service," Cr Regan said.

"We want the State Government to bring forward that bus line to deliver the planning precinct around the



Price put on Dee Why to Chatswood rapid bus service

new hospital in its entirety and to take pressure off the Military Rd corridor, irrespective of whether the Beaches Link tunnel is built."

However, a NSW Transport spokesman was reluctant to commit to the spend.

"We're adding more than 1000 extra weekly services on the northern beaches to improve access to the new hospital and meet the growing demand" he said. "This is on top of the more than 3200 extra weekly services introduced in November 2017."

"Rather than concentrating improvements on just one route, the initial service

plan focuses on improving services in the wider catchment of the new hospital."

Two new routes have been created to service the hospital — the 141 from Manly to Austlink via Balgowlah, and the 193 from Austlink to Warringah Mall via Frenchs Forest. A number of routes will also be extended to Frenchs Forest before the hospital opens.

But Cr Regan said the \$4.5m per year was a "small price to pay" for a congestion busting service.

"The Greater Sydney Commission and the Prime Minister himself talk about having a

30 minute city, and here is an opportunity for the sake of under-\$5m to build a transport system which helps deliver that and untangle the mess that is the northern beaches public transport," he said.

It would have five stops: **Stop 1:** Skyline Shops; **Stop 2:** Northern Beaches Hospital; **Stop 3:** Forest Way Shops; **Stop 4:** Forestville shops and, **Stop 5:** Crown of the Hill, then Chatswood.

Cr Regan has written to all four peninsula state MPs and Planning Minister Anthony Roberts, who he said were all supportive of the plan.

Mr Royle said the plan

was possible in the short, to midterm future, if funded.

The indicative costings would be to use the same double-decker buses as the B-Line, 16 of which he has already ordered to service his existing network.

"We trialled the B-Line bus before the B-Line started, that was our preferred option," Mr Royle said. "It is our standard service instead of articulated buses or an alternative double deck bus. It required some approvals on the backstreets around Belrose and Terrey Hills.

"We have negotiated that with council and we have 16 coming from Malaysia."

The proposed limited stop service would run during peak hours, with more modelling needed as to how often it would run in off-peak.

While it would not be in before the hospital opens it could be built to cater for the additional 3000 homes expected to be built in Frenchs Forest.

"We want to build the infrastructure, the community always asks for the infrastructure to be built prior to any density," Cr Regan said. "Residents have been asking for a fast direct link straight up the guts of Warringah Rd forever.

"Let's build it now before we get more density."