

Former Speaker Bronwyn Bishop throws her support behind protest to stop B-Line buses in Mona Vale

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Bronwyn Bishop speaks to residents at a B-Line protest in Mona Vale. Picture: Save Mona Vale.

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- [Fears the B-Line will lead to a loss of trees in Mona Vale](#)
- [Phone charging stations and extra leg room on B-Line](#)

THERE were calls to “bring back Bronwyn” as the former Mackellar federal Liberal MP gave a defiant speech at a Mona Vale protest rally.

Bronwyn Bishop — who quit as Speaker over expenses claimed for helicopter flights — is now fighting public transport upgrades on the peninsula.

She also took aim at other Liberal Party policies, including the plan for Mona Vale Hospital and council amalgamations.

Bronwyn Bishop speaking at a Mona Vale rally. Video: Save Mona Vale.



Mrs Bishop made an impromptu speech to a full room at Mona Vale Memorial Hall on Sunday, moments after former Labor premier Barrie Unsworth criticised her replacement Jason Falinski.

The group, which is protesting against the B-Line and the removal of trees in Village Park to make way for a bus stop, believes it will be used to justify highrise units.

Yesterday, Mrs Bishop told the *Manly Daily* she had no intention of returning to politics, but admitted she sympathised with the Save Mona Vale group's plight.

Mr Unsworth made the call for a return of Mrs Bishop, [citing comments by Mr Falinski](#) in February that a private operator, rather than the State Transit Authority, should run the B-Line.

Mr Falinski wrote to Premier Gladys Berejiklian, asking her to consider a privately-run B-Line.



Former MP Bronwyn Bishop at her Newport home. Picture: Sam Ruttyn.

“Handing over the B-Line to the STA and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union without giving local businesses the chance to tender for it is putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank and letting the lunatics run the asylum,” Mr Falinski wrote.

Mr Unsworth, premier from 1986 to 1988, said: “With someone representing us like him, I say, bring back Bronwyn.”

The same sentiments were echoed when Mrs Bishop took to the stage. She said she had missed Mr Unsworth’s speech, to which he again called for her return to cheers from the crowd.

“There was a meeting called and I attended it because I thought the people had a good point to make and it is important people realise how special this part of the world is to us, but also as a resource for other parts of Sydney,” she said told the *Manly Daily*.

She told the crowd that the region’s unemployment rate was lower than 3 per cent, and “is deemed to have full employment”, meaning units would have to be built to make the B-Line feasible.

“Wanting to have more jobs here ... means that you would have to import more people to take up those jobs,” she said. “High-density living is what most people in this electorate have come to escape.”



*Former premier Barrie Unsworth at the B-Line construction site at Mona Vale.
Picture: Martin Lange*

Mr Falinski said he had spent the last week getting opinions of peak-hour commuters and not one person had criticised the B-Line.

“I doubt any of the protesters you refer to catch buses during the morning peak,” he said. “It is disappointing that people who don’t use public transport every day are trying to deny the many who do an opportunity to get better services.”

A Transport for NSW spokesman said Mrs Bishop was “incorrect in her characterisation of the drivers behind B-Line”.

“The B-Line has been designed to deliver customers on the northern beaches with more reliable and more frequent bus services between Mona Vale and the Sydney CBD, where there is increasing demand,” he said.

In her speech, Mrs Bishop also said the Mona Vale Hospital needed to be retained and include an intensive care unit, which is currently not part of its upgrade.

She said the hospital was being bulldozed, but that “has been denied, denied, denied denied, and really we can’t have that”.

“I personally raised \$250,000 towards keeping that hospital and to see that it will no longer have the ability to do proper emergency work because it will lose its ICU ... is shameful,” she said.



Jason Falinski with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Picture: Annika Enderborg.



Concerned Mona Vale residents Mark Edwards, Lyn Illingsworth, John Illingsworth, and Phil Walker at Village Park, Mona Vale. Picture: Troy Snook

“There is a need to maintain that facility here ... to see that hospital now abandoned is just appalling.”

Health Minister Brad Hazzard strongly denied any suggestion Mona Vale Hospital was being bulldozed.

“The northern beaches is getting the biggest and the best new hospital facilities that we have had in more than 60 years,” he said.

“Let’s just get that constructed and let the people of the beaches decide whether this is a facility they principally want to be using.”



Residents protesting the B-Line at Village Park in Mona Vale.

He pointed out that Manly and Mona Vale hospitals combined have five operating theatres, and the incoming Northern Beaches Hospital would have 14.

Mrs Bishop also told the *Manly Daily* she supported Pittwater Council being re-established.

“I have always opposed forced amalgamations from day one,” she said.

“There were people talking (at the rally) about wanting to see that happen.

“It has been a successful council, in my view, and I oppose its forced amalgamation.”

She expressed concern that Pittwater Council had opted not to take legal action like other councils against the mergers.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/manly-daily/former-speaker-bronwyn-bishop-throws-her-support-behind-protest-to-stop-blind-buses-in-mona-vale/news-story/a661fe7b4111af637bf851d6b7b85851>