

## Open Letter About Bus Numbering

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Dear QLD government, councils, bus services, supporting agencies, organisations and bodies,

The bus naming convention we are accustomed to in Brisbane has a less than ideal quality.

Not too long ago in Brisbane I was attempting to follow the journey recommended by the TransLink app.

*I check the app and know all the buses I have to take. I see the next bus I must board arrives in 2 minutes. I sprint in the direction of the station as fast as I can. There is my bus number, pulling up in front of me. "I've made it!" goes through my head. Lost for breath I climb aboard, swipe my card and take a seat. Mission complete.*

*"Wait!", I thought, "This is the right direction, right?". I walk up to the bus driver. I ask this driver if we are going in my direction. We struggle through a bit of a language barrier before he tells me that I am on the wrong bus. I'm on the right number but going the wrong direction. That cold feeling that flows through your body, known by all those who have screwed up on the simplest of tasks and wasted a ton of time, is exactly what I feel.*

*I get off the bus at the next station, the bus driver pointing out where I need to go to get my next bus. I stand outside in the heat realising there's little shelter and I hadn't brought any water.*

*I stand at the station in the sweltering heat, feeling the sweat all over my body for another 20 minutes. "Here it is! My bus at last!". I get on the bus. The cool air conditioning is an instant reprieve from the sweltering heat outside. The bus pulls up near where I began my journey, facing an altogether difference direction this time.*

*I wipe the sweat off my body with some tissue paper I have. I'm exhausted, sweaty, probably neither look nor smell great and am running quite late for my meetup. I look at my phone. "Well, that's an hour of my life wasted." I think to myself.*

Had I only taken a moment longer to look at the app, all this could have been avoided. That being said I would most likely also have missed my bus with that extra time spent trying to zoom in and analyse the map.

My story having come to a conclusion, there are many other stories, like the story of Anna. Some years ago, I found myself talking with Anna, a rather old Chinese lady who had lived in Australia for quite a few years, though still had very limited English. She told me that she didn't know many people or leave the house often, her main interaction was with her daughter. I asked her why she didn't get out more often, do more things and meet more people, after all she seemed relatively well off.

Her answer filled me with sadness. She was scared. She was afraid that if she went out she might not be able to find her way home. She didn't trust her ability to navigate the transport system. The identically numbered, different destination bus system had gotten her previously as well.

## **The Proposal**

I propose we change the numbering system to add a letter to the end of the bus number. An example of such a system would be, a bus going from a larger location to a smaller location have an E appended to the end. A bus going from a smaller location to a larger location have an M appended to the end. Should the bus go in an overall clockwise loop, append a C. For an anti-clockwise look, append an A.

M: Metro

E: Exitly

C: Clockwise

A: Anti-clockwise

It is important to always avoid any number or letters that could be confused for another in different fonts and at a distance, hence no 0/O, 1/I/L, A/R/H.

As the system is currently almost completely digital, I can't imagine this task would be overly difficult to implement.

Kind Regards,

Matthew Asia

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