

Anger over bus deals

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BUS operators have hit out at the state government for spreading misinformation on its negotiations for new route contracts.

Bus Association Victoria says the government is forcing operators to give up their assets — including bus terminals and vehicles — at the end of five- or 10-year contracts.

The government is planning to overhaul the network by renegotiating the contracts, which will expire this year.

BAV executive director Chris Lowe said despite government claims to the contrary, the bus companies' assets would have to be transferred to public hands at the end of all contracts. The government says it is getting rid of the contracts' exclusivity provisions, which allow existing operators to have first dibs on new routes, making buses more expensive to run.