

COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION OF NSW

BATHURST BRANCH
298 HOWICK STREET
BATHURST 2795

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BATHURST CPSA is a non-sectarian non-party political organisation caring for the welfare of its pensioner and self-funded retirees membership.

CURRENT BATHURST MEMBERSHIP: 540

3rd April 2003

Dr T Parry

Chairman

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

PO Box Q290

QVB PO, NSW 1230

Dear Dr Parry

The Bathurst Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association represents a significant proportion of the elderly population of this rapidly expanding city of Bathurst. This group is increasingly dependent on local public transport (private bus system) and regional/metropolitan transport (Countrylink and CityRail).

For some years past our membership has continually expressed concern at the inequalities in public transport fares for Seniors and Pensioners (S/P) between the public (STA) and private bus systems, and between regional, outer metropolitan and inner metropolitan bus and train systems.

The present situation is thus as we understand it:

1. Regional travellers (S/P) are able to travel in their own region by Countrylink on S/P concession fares for \$2.20 return, valid for seven days. However this fare does not allow travel anywhere into or across the CityRail system's boundaries.

2. While Bathurst is regarded as a CityRail station (except for XPT travel), Orange is not. The Bathurst S/P concession fare to the metropolitan transport system is \$3.30 day return, with unrestricted travel on trains, STA ferries and STA buses. Folk from Orange and beyond pay half the Countrylink fare **plus \$1.10** for access to the metropolitan system. The latter folk are prevented from buying \$3.30 S/P concession at Bathurst station unless they wait two or more hours for a following coach to Lithgow, which seems to be illegal anyhow.

3. S/P concession travellers pay \$3.30 to say Penrith, and then have to pay a half-fare on local private buses; but if continuing their CityRail journey into the **STA bus system have** nothing further to pay.

4. It is strongly evident that those who benefit most from the \$1.10 inner metropolitan S/P concession are Seniors in the increasingly affluent inner suburbs. However in the less affluent outer suburbs, S/P concession travellers pay a half-fare on private buses, plus \$1.10 (or more than likely \$2.20, for travel on CityRail as happens with residents of Wollongong, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and elsewhere beyond the metropolitan system).

5. Outer metropolitan CityRail S/P concession fares are \$2.20 even for travelling short distances (eg Blaxland to Penrith), whereas this distance in inner suburbs costs only \$1.10.

6. In regional centres no \$1.10 S/P concession is available as these areas are universally serviced by private operators.



We have discussed these inequities at length and make the following recommendations; they would seem to be cost effective, equitable and politically neutral:

1. That the 10% GST be removed for S/P concession fares and included within rounded dollar fares. Thus the \$2.20 fare would become \$2 (actually \$1.80 + GST). This would bring concession fares roughly into line with inflation and the increase in pensions since 1988, which are in the range of 70%-75% over those fourteen years.

2. That the State be mapped in transport sectors of 100kms in both country and metropolitan regions, for which the minimum S/P concession would be \$2, consisting of a \$1 "flagfall"(or access) plus \$1 for each 100km sector.

3. That this increase when applied to inner metropolitan travel be used to subsidize the whole of the private bus and ferry systems which would then also charge the \$2 (\$1 + \$1) all-day S/P concession across all modes.

4. That these politically sensitive fare increases in the inner metropolitan region be rationalized as producing equity across the whole State, and are the first increase since 1988 (when inner suburbs were less affluent in senior terms than they are now). By contrast they would be universally appealing in other areas.

It is noted that the Commonwealth Government had allocated some \$19million for the introduction of a National S/P concession (either as an election promise or a budget line?) provided all States adopted a uniform concession scheme.

Yours sincerely



Daryl Taylor
Transport Officer
Bathurst Branch, C.P.S.A.