

NSW Retired Teachers Association

19 May 2003

Mr. Dennis Maloney
Program Manager, Transport
Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal
Level 2, 44 Market Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Submission: Public Transport Fares Review 2003/04

The NSW Retired Teachers Association represents the interests of more than 5000 retired citizens, the majority of whom live in and around the Sydney region. Most of the members are self funded retirees on moderate incomes.

This submission focuses on the public transport requirements of senior citizens.

The NSW Retired Teachers Association advocates strongly that there be no increase in the public concession fare for older persons holding aged pensioner or government senior cards.

Points in support of our submission:.

Financial

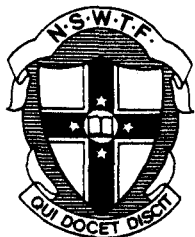
Most aged persons are not wealthy. For many, their incomes, while not qualifying for an aged pension, are often just above the cut off point. The income for older people on the aged pension is low. For both these groups, the cost of transport is a very important consideration in their living costs. Any increase in fare costs will cause a lowering of their standard of living.

Health & Social

It is well documented that socially active older people are healthier. To take part in the many activities in the community, senior citizens must have access to affordable public transport. If fares are high, older people will remain at home, become inactive and suffer more health problems. As a result, there will be greater demand on health services, particularly our hospital system that is already severely overstretched.

With affordable fares, older people use public transport to meet friends and participate in the community. They maintain good health and benefit the economy, particularly the economy of small business as they spend in cafes, other shops, cinemas and places of interest.

Senior citizens are increasing in number and they are living longer. There will be greater demand for public transport from this group. Older people tend to travel outside peak



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hours. Hence there should be more revenue for the NSW Government at times when public transport services are underutilised.

Volunteering

Many older people are active as volunteer. They help in a many areas, ranging from work as carers for the young and old to work in libraries, schools, hospitals, galleries and museums. In addition, older people organise their own groups where they give lectures and teach many skills.

If fare costs are raised, many senior citizens would be unable to afford the travelling costs to continue as volunteers. There would be a serious adverse effect those organisations dependent on volunteers, and on the many people using the organisations..

Environment and Safety

Older people will use public transport instead of cars if fares are low. This could help reduce the numbers of cars on the roads and reduce pollution of the environment, particularly with regard to carbon dioxide and nitrogen gas emissions.

Use of public transport instead of cars would also lessen traffic on roads. As there appears to be a direct correlation between the amount of traffic and the incidence of traffic accidents, reduced car usage by older people should reduce car accidents.

A strong incentive for older people to give up the convenience of cars is low public transport costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the views of the members of the NSW Retired Teachers Association.

May Steilberg
Hon. Secretary.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'May Steilberg'.