

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my alarm and dismay at the proposal to increase the cost to seniors for public transport travel in NSW.

I was most concerned to read, just before the end of last year, that the enquiry had found that an increase from \$2:50 to \$9:00 daily is considered reasonable. There are many reasons for my concern, which I will list below:

- Seniors contribute hugely to our society and economy through the voluntary work that many of them undertake. Many of the institutions in this state, government and not for profit and families (hospitals, galleries, meals on wheels, Red Cross, the Smith Family, Lifeline, Stewart House, Far West Children's centre, the justice system, schools, families - providing Childcare for young grandchildren- migrant and refugee resource and support groups, political groups to name just a few of the organisations who benefit from the voluntary efforts of my own immediate circle. They and many other organisations would cease to function effectively without the huge contribution made by volunteers - the vast majority of whom are seniors. The fact that volunteers can travel to and from their volunteering venues for \$2.50 per day is a much more attractive proposition than a \$9 daily travel cost. There are many for whom that increased cost would cause them to have to give up their voluntary activity. Apart from the actual voluntary work, seniors also contribute to the economy of the state on these occasions with shopping - refreshments, lunches, dinners etc.

- It is a well known fact that social isolation contributes to poor mental health. Many older people live alone, and without the ability to move around the community without huge expense, the cost to the state health system may well outweigh any savings made through this shortsighted fare increase. Other costs could also include increased requirements for the state coffers to support the organisations currently kept afloat by the voluntary work of seniors. The \$2.50 cap on daily travel enables seniors to travel to and enjoy many cultural activities ( whose ticket purchase again supports the wider economy)

- One most important result of the current fare structure is that it keeps cars off the already crowded roads.....that cannot be a bad thing! Our cities are already clogged by slow moving traffic - surely we don't need any more cars on the roads??

- Self funded retirees should not now be penalised for their foresight during their working lives in saving for their retirement. They can't access centrelink, they are not a drain on the public purse and their incomes are generally fixed at a much lower rate than the general community, with little hope of any increase. Neither should pensioners be penalised any more than they already have been by government cuts. This whole idea is just punitive and shortsighted.

Many other civilised countries REWARD their retirees for a life of economic contribution by giving their citizens FREE TRAVEL from the day they turn 60!!!

We will not take this lying down.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Wickens