

I would like to make a submission to the inquiry on bus and ferry increases.

I do not think it is appropriate to increase bus or ferry fares, especially without any guarantee of improved service. I am particularly concerned about ferry fare increases. Ferries provide an excellent alternative to already clogged roads and the failing rail system. I think the argument that ferry fares should be increased because the average ferry commuter has a relatively high income is highly contentious and if implemented will become a self fulfilling prophecy.

There are many people like myself who are far from wealthy and live in rental accommodation near ferry routes. We regularly use the ferry service (which already is disproportionately expensive compared to other modes of public transport) because it provides the most efficient and pleasurable way to commute to the city.

I have never owned a car and believe in the principle of public transport. It is increasingly hard to use the rail and bus system because the services are constantly cut (such as in the so-called better buses for the Eastern Suburbs and the new weekend Cityrail timetable).

It would be better to increase the number of ferry commuters. This could be achieved by providing regular services and affordable fares. Each full ferry replaces approximately five full buses.

A government that claims green credentials should be using everything they can to encourage the increased use of public transport. I applaud Bob Carr's opinion piece in today's (September 7) Sydney Morning Herald about the need to support initiatives like the Kyoto Protocol. It would be wonderful if the NSW Labor government were to provide more than words and actively support the public transport system. This would make a substantial contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in this state by taking cars off the road.

Finally, public transport is an essential **service**. It is not a business.

Yours sincerely,

Estelle Lazer PhD