



# *Throsby*

## Community Forum

---

**Vice Chairperson**  
John Hayes

**Secretary**  
Lyn Kilby

The Chairperson  
IPART  
PO Box Q290  
QVB POST OFFICE NSW 1230

Email: [ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au)

16<sup>th</sup> October 2007

### REQUEST FOR BUS FARE REDUCTION

Dear Sir,

Throsby Community Forum, as an organisation representing five major inner city suburbs of Newcastle, requests that IPART consider a request from the people of Newcastle for a reduction in the maximum fares of the State Transit Buses and Ferry of 25%.

We note that there is an application for a fare increase and request that our request for a fare reduction be given similar treatment.

We believe a fare reduction is reasonable and can be justified on the following basis:-

- The buses operated from the Newcastle depots at Hamilton and Belmont are of a size that is grossly excessive to the passenger requirements.
  - This raises the capital costs of the equipment unnecessarily and inflates the other costs.
  - The qualifications of the drivers are higher than necessary and thus inflate the costs.
  - The operational costs are in excess of the requirement due to operating oversize equipment

- The cost of fuel, consumables and maintenance is in excess of the real needs.
- There is a very little community consultation and a very poor integration with plans for the Newcastle LGA.
  - There is no community consultation with route design.
  - There is no community consultation with route timetables.
  - There is no community consultation with new bus purchases.
  - There was no submission by State Transit into the City Centre Plan
  - There was no input into the Pool Service Delivery Model.
- The timetables operated by Newcastle Buses are very wasteful and highly inefficient.
  - Rarely do buses carry more than 10 passengers
  - Commonly buses are empty
  - Commonly buses are operated whilst not in service
  - Buses frequently follow each other.
  - The 97% efficiency quoted would seem to be an apparition. The basis for calculating the efficiency would seem unrealistic.
  - Timetables do not reflect seasonal or sporting needs.
  - Connectivity problems are common.
- The routes operated do not match the needs and requirements of the people of Newcastle thereby causing the buses in service to operate with unprofitable loadings. Further they fail to meet the civic needs of the City of Newcastle.
  - Poor late night services from the city and major areas.
  - Poor timetables to empty the city after the pub lockdown
  - Lack of buses after hours and at weekends
  - The failure to display timetables at bus stops
  - Hard to memorise timetables.
  - Failure to provide adequate services to 3 hospitals Mater, John Hunter and Belmont.
- The highly environmentally unfriendly buses operated by Newcastle Buses impose a major cost on to the community of Newcastle.
  - Grossly oversize buses consume unwarranted quantities of fuel.
  - The emissions are well in excess of those justified by passenger numbers.
  - There are no LPG, LNG or CNG buses in operation.
  - Not one bus in the fleet meets modern Euro Standards
  - The damage to the pavement by the unnecessary operation of excessively heavy vehicles is extremely costly.
- Infrastructure provided for passengers is minimal.
  - Health safety and hygiene at bus stops and terminals is very inadequate and well below acceptable standards.
  - Very few bus stops and terminals provide shade, rain protection and wind shelter. Those that do are grossly inadequate.
  - Route signage and timetables are not available at most bus stops.

- Route signage and timetables on display are hard to read and have small font size.
- No Newcastle buses have bike or surfboard racks.
- Lighting in bus structures is almost nonexistent.
- There has been very little change since the last fare increase.
- The ferry only operates to Stockton and provides no other service
  - The ferry only operates for about 10 minutes each hour and sits idle for the remainder of the time.
  - A second ferry sits idle at all times
  - There is a ferry wharf at Wickham unused.
  - There is a number charter boats located in Newcastle that could be utilised in emergencies.

### **Conclusion.**

Whilst the capacity of the buses and ferries continue to be in excess of the capacity needs of Newcastle **AND** the timetables are inappropriate **AND** the routes inadequate **AND** infrastructure substandard it is unreasonable for the Government or the users to fund the extravagance and waste.

The charges to users should be reduced by 25% **AND** the management of the Newcastle operation be directed to increase the service delivery and reduce operating costs.

John L Hayes  
Acting Chair