

To The New South Wales Transport Authority

This submission is on behalf of all International Students in University of New South Wales.

As students who are currently studying full time in the University of New South Wales, we have always feel burdened with the cost of living in Sydney especially with the general rising of Australian currency against other currencies. It is unfair that we, as a student, are discriminated based on countries (Administrative Decisions Tribunal of New South Wales decision in March 2006) and with the proposed increase of the general public transport it is going to put more pressure on the living cost that we have incurred.

From international students' perspective, the burden of paying full fee for public transport and exacerbated with a further increase in public transport fare contributes to the increase in numbers of international students searching for an alternative country or to other states that will provide concession public transport and living cost in general. Our parents usually have already set up an estimated fund and where the fund cannot accommodate the cost of living and studying in New South Wales, parents will seek alternative options such as to send their children to other state or countries which have cheaper living cost, or simply to withdraw their children home. With a current rise of Australian currency against other currency, an increase in general living cost, and a propose increase in public transport, it is very appealing to seek for another option for education.

To be noted, International students contribute approximately 5 billion dollars to the New South Wales economy per annum, through their expenditure on rent, transport, food, goods and services and tuition fees. The education service is just like any other businesses. Competition to attract International students to Australia is competitive and while New South Wales attracts the largest number of students it also reaps extensive revenue while concurrently discriminating against those who make a substantial economic contribution. Besides Victoria, New South Wales is the only state in Australia that discriminates against international students in this regard. The other countries such as United States, Canada, and European countries have also become a more affordable option for international students compared to Australia and New South Wales in particular. The other Asia-Pacific countries also offer more appealing education services with better facilities, modern buildings, and decent quality of teaching. This reflects a strong and increasing global competition for international students.

The threat to Australia's education export market from growing competition must be considered and the Government must respond to it. It is our view that financial incentives should be considered relating to overseas students and to the higher education market overall, in this case through concession travel entitlements on public transport. State and Federal incentives must be provided to the international higher education market to expand growth in that sector and to protect the economic interests of this State. The economic consequences of declining enrolments from international students, and on the

budgetary estimate of providing concession entitlements for international students and the addition increase of public transport fare should be revisited.