

From: Steve Aitchison
Sent: Wednesday, 24 June 2009 1:37 PM
To: IPART Mailbox
Subject: IPART Review of fares for metropolitan and outer metropolitan bus services from January 2010

Dear IPART

**Should Newcastle fares be harmonised with fares in the other bus contract regions?
If not, what justification is there for a separate fare structure?**

I suggest that fares from other areas be harmonised and use the Newcastle fare system as the way forward. The system works because it is simple. A trip to work costs me \$3.20 – end of story – it doesn't matter how far.

Retain this simple system. I really don't care what happens in other areas of the state. So what if "having different fares in Newcastle to those in the surrounding regions confuses passengers". Government buses are blue and distinctive – that's how I know what the pricing structure is. Michael Costa once wrote that the attitude of some members of the public is, "I am stupid and ugly so what is the Government going to do about it". Is this what the proposed change is about? To be able to accommodate the moronic unwashed from their Housing Commission hovels to Centrelink without confusing them?

How can the proposal to "harmonise" fares be seen as progressive? Newcastle has a three level structure and you want to replace it with a five level structure that requires the passenger to know where each section starts and finishes. Can you just picture each transaction as each passenger gets on?

"I want to go into town?"

"Where in town?"

"I will know when I get there"

"Yeah, but it doesn't work like that. Now where do you want to go?"

"OK then. Cambridge Hotel"

"Cambridge Hotel it is. But by God if you don't get off then you will have to pay more"

You could time the trip with a sun dial. The Newcastle system with its simple structure and availability of dunk tickets works. Let the rest of the state adopt our system.

Here is another option. Do nothing. Now that is one thing that this Government can do.

Your discussion paper also states that ".....the Newcastle CBD introduced a fare free zone a couple of years ago, continues to be under utilised and many buses travel through the Newcastle CBD with few, if any, passengers". Utter falsehoods. The busiest bus stop in the morning is the one at the outer edge of the free fare zone. Buses don't travel "through Newcastle CBD". In most instances buses travel to Newcastle CBD and terminate at the extremity of a peninsula – of course it will be near empty when it gets to the end.

DO NOTHING.

Stephen Aitchison