

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT BUS FARE PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION FROM ANA CORPUZ

NO BUS FARE INCREASE UNLESS CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVES!

Proposal statement	Comment
<p>For bus services in rural and regional NSW, it outlines progress made towards developing new arrangements that will optimise service delivery and viability, value for money and accountability</p>	<p>The paragraph did not refer to arrangements that will optimize service quality.</p>
<p>Improvements in performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved customer focus and community accountability through requirements that operators publish Passenger Relations and Accessible Transport Action Plans, participate in the 131 500 Transport Infoline, report publicly on performance, and consult on service reviews and changes. 	<p>It will boost confidence on the STA 131500 complaint handling system if guidelines are made available to the public in order for us to understand what happens to our complaints, how investigations are conducted and how resolutions are made. At present, complaints reported to 131500 are simply received. Complainant is called after a couple of days and then after another couple of days, are advised in a general manner ' investigations were conducted and appropriate actions will be made'. This is supposed to satisfy the complainant! No further advice is given to the complainant after this.</p> <p>I have made a few complaints in the past and I have never been given specific advice as to what happened to my complaint. I have come to the point of losing interest in complaining as I know all I'm going to get is a standard 'template' of a response. It is just a waste of time!!!</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance reporting against clear KPIs, meaning that performance requirements are able to be monitored and enforced. 	<p>The KPIs should include clear indication of customer service issues, complaints and how this is reduced over time. It should include timeliness of addressing complaint, not simply returning a call or responding to the letter – that is not resolving a complaint! It should give specific feedback/advice to the complainant and include level of satisfaction of customers over action taken in relation to complaint. If STA genuinely aims to improve</p>

	customer service and is not simply concerned with the books looking good, this is how a customer service KPI should be orientated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development and roll out of service networks, supported by bus priority, that better meet passenger needs and provide for higher frequency and more reliable services along strategic corridors. 	<p>Passenger need drivers to be helpful, patient, tolerant, etc. Is this included in the STA definition of passenger needs? It is not enough to say we added 10 buses or there is more frequency or we are more timely or we have expanded or detangled the routes.</p> <p>Driver attitude plays an important role in meeting passenger needs.</p>
<p>KPIs</p> <p>Operators will also be required to publish the results of any passenger satisfaction surveys undertaken by the Ministry as part of the regime for auditing performance under the new contracts.</p>	<p>Not only to publish results of satisfaction surveys but also to include strategies to improve level of satisfaction of customers, how these strategies are being implemented and if goals are being met.</p>
<p>2.3 Passenger relations & information</p> <p>Central to the new, performance-based contracts are the Key Performance Indicators and reporting requirements that enable the Ministry to monitor how operators are performing against those KPIs.</p>	<p>Conduct stakeholder consultation of what the KPIs should be and how they are measured. What happens if KPIs are not met? <u>Any bus fare increase should not occur if customer service KPIs are not met as expected.</u> To justify fare increases simply based on CPIs, increase in operational cost etc is a total disregard of the value of the customer service component of STA performance.</p>

<p>Business and other plans</p> <p>To ensure operators are focused on achieving their performance requirements, and demonstrate how they will deliver against their KPIs, the new contracts require operators to develop, publish and comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Passenger Relations Plan to improve the interaction between operator staff and their customers; • An Environmental Plan to develop a cleaner metropolitan bus fleet. <p>This includes requirements to participate in the RTA's Clean Fleet vehicles maintenance program and train drivers in eco driving techniques;</p>	<p>The Draft Passenger Relations Plan and the other plans should be open to the public for comment.</p> <p>In addition to public exhibition of these plans, the Environmental Plan should outline how and when the whole bus fleet will be converted to clean fuels such as gas or biofuels.</p>
<p>When completed, however, they will be published on each operator's website.</p>	<p>As the general public is not familiar with all the providers, links to all these plans should also be found in the STA and Ministry's websites.</p>
<p>This means that complaints about private bus services are not yet completely transparent to the Ministry, including measures such as response times.</p> <p>A common system is currently being developed and all operators will be required to use it.</p>	<p>This is good only if the 131500 complaints handling system faults as described above are rectified first. What's the point of a unified reporting system when it does not gain the confidence of the customer in the first place? It is all going to be just a feel good exercise for STA – something to meet minimum customer service standards to justify more fare increases but not necessarily offering an avenue for customers/passengers to be heard.</p> <p>STA should demonstrate that it is not afraid to be evaluated by the commuting public it is supposed to serve.</p>
<p>OTHERS</p>	<p>Student passes period validity should be extended (8pm?) to consider students who have to go home outside of normal hours (6pm) due to school related activities or long trips especially when connecting trains are delayed. They should also be valid on weekends subject to proof provided by school.</p>