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Mr James P Cox  
IPART

Sir,

I oppose the increase in bus ticket prices, particularly the Submissions 1 and 2 from the Ministry of Transport to IPART dated 22/8/2006 ([http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/Revised Ministry of Transport - Proposal to IPART on Bus Fares for 2007.PDF](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/Revised%20Ministry%20of%20Transport%20-%20Proposal%20to%20IPART%20on%20Bus%20Fares%20for%202007.PDF)).

The average age of a bus in the Sydney Buses fleet is 12.8 years, and there are 15% with more than a million kilometres on the clock ([http://www.nsw.liberal.org.au/media/view.cfm?media\\_id=2788](http://www.nsw.liberal.org.au/media/view.cfm?media_id=2788)). The older buses are uncomfortable and not air-conditioned, which is a curse in the middle of a Sydney summer. A fare increase is not justified, given the continued poor condition of the bus fleet.

The recent additional growth in passenger numbers is largely due to high petrol prices, not any efforts of the STA or the government. Higher fees should not be imposed on those new converts to public transport, lest they return back to their cars at the first sign of reduced petrol prices.

Extra services in peak hours (<http://www.sydneybuses.nsw.gov.au/news.php?id=371>) are welcomed, but these seem to be coming at the expense of non-peak hour services, with some northern beaches routes recently axed or downgraded (<http://www.sydneybuses.nsw.gov.au/news.php?id=368>). This is especially poor given that no alternative public transport option is available in this region. More attention needs to be given to increasing revenues from non-commuter patronage and other sources, such as advertising or reducing costs, rather than gouging commuters and treating them as cash cows.

There is also an urgent need for additional improvements in passenger journey times, particularly by introducing bus-only lanes on major routes, such as Epping Road after the Lane Cove Tunnel commences operations.

Sincerely,

Andrew Burton